STUDIES IN THE ATONEMENT

WILLARD NATHAN TOBIE

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STUDIES IN THE ATONEMENT

BY

WILLARD NATHAN TOBIE

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Introduction

IT was with a feeling akin to presumption that these studies on the atonement were undertaken. When so many of the wise and good of ages past have presented their solutions, it seems presumptuous to hope that any further light can be thrown on so profound a subject.

This little book grows out of an intense personal experience—a fact which extenuates the presumption. Nineteen years ago, in college days, the author's mind was torn with doubt and perplexity over the doctrine of the atonement. The books I read, most of them standard works accepted by the Churches, and the sermons I heard, both liberal and orthodox, appealed neither to my reason nor my conscience. In fact, they left me in more hopeless confusion. They only thickened the mists. I well remember the mental despair into which I sank. For some years I avoided all reading on the subject; for

there had come over me a deep dissatisfaction with the generally accepted views. In the course of years, with little apparent effort on my part, the fog seemed slowly to clear away, and almost before I knew it I found myself in possession of what was to me an intellectually rational and morally satisfactory theory of the subject. Further reading in many lines, deeper knowledge of the New Testament Christ, and more intimate acquaintance with human life, have only confirmed this view. The result of these experiences is embodied in this humble treatise. Complete originality is not claimed for all the views here expressed: we live too late to be original; but in a very true sense, that is original which is independently evolved out of one's own life, even though others may have had the same experiences and expressed the same ideas. In this sense, all religious experience is original with every soul.

The theory here outlined appears to me rational and morally defensible. If it shall appear so to unprejudiced readers, and shall aid some confused and doubting mind to clearer under-

standing of Calvary, the reward will be worth the lonely years of intellectual confusion through which the author passed on his way to peace and joy.

WILLARD NATHAN TOBIE.

Lincoln, Illinois, 1913.

CHAPTER I

The Necessity for a Restatement of Theology

Chapter I

THE NECESSITY FOR A RESTATEMENT OF THEOLOGY

TRUTH is essentially the same in all ages. "The Word of the Lord endureth forever." It is also a fact that human viewpoints change, and therefore expression of truth will inevitably change. Every age has its characteristic point of view, its dominant mode of thinking. The truth of the ages is expressed in the language of the age, and is differently approached in various periods of human history. There is an old story of four blind men who were allowed to touch an elephant as they went past. One, who happened to grasp his tail, said the elephant was like a rope. Another, who had touched his leg, said the elephant was like the trunk of a tree. The third, having felt the animal's side, said, "That is all rubbish: an elephant is like a wall." The fourth blind man, who had felt only the great ear of the elephant,

affirmed that he was like none of those things aforesaid, but was like a leather bag. So our view of truth depends largely on the angle from which we approach it, and our description of it will be in the language of our experience. In the age when men thought the earth was the stationary center about which revolved planets, sun, and stars, all thinking was colored more or less by that hypothesis. Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler, and Newton changed the intellectual viewpoint, not only for astronomy, but for all categories of thought.

Theology, no less than physical science or philosophy, is modified by the dominant thought-form of the age. Theology is either rabbinical, ritualistic, scholastic, mathematical, legal, political, evolutionary, or humanitarian, according to the theologian's characteristic thought-form; and the theologian's thought-form is affected by the dominant spirit of his time no less than the color of the chameleon is affected by environment, or the thermometer by temperature.

The Bible abounds in evidence of this statement. Running throughout the Old Testament

are at least two widely different classes of writings, the priestly and the prophetic, the difference being due to differing viewpoints of identical truth. Priestly writers thought in terms of rite and symbol. To them the ceremonies of the cult were the language in which Jehovah expressed His thought. The priestly religion was formal, sacrificial, ritualistic. Opposed to this was the prophetic attitude. This was less formal. Ritual was minimized. Externalism was often ridiculed and condemned. To the prophetic soul God spoke not so much in the design of tabernacle or temple, in bloody sacrifices, or in any ceremonial observances, as in creation, in historic providence, in the still small voice of the Spirit. The heavens and the earth were full of the glory of Jehovah, and their "words" spoke to the end of the world, telling God's power and wisdom. The rise and fall of nations were the doings of a majestic, moral God. By Him kings reigned and princes decreed justice. The prophet needed no Shekinah to assure him of Jehovah's presence. Sun, moon, and stars, the beauty of the earth, and its provi-

dential adjustments, were the testimony—the very Ark and Shekinah of omnipresent Deity. The prophet's own soul, hot with moral enthusiasm, was the sacrificial altar burning with sacred fire. Micah sets these two attitudes in contrast in the sixth chapter:

"Wherewith shall I come before Jehovah, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will Jehovah be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

These two views of religion still persist, even in Christianity. The Roman Church thinks in terms of symbol and ceremony. Her views of Deity, duty, destiny are more or less formal, mechanical, ritualistic. The Protestant Church represents more or less the prophetic aspect of religion. The Roman Church exalts the altar;

the Protestant, the pulpit. The typical Papist thinks in terms of cult and institution; the normal Protestant of the evangelical type in terms of the individual soul and its relation to the cosmos. Although both hold the same historical facts as the foundation of the Christian religion, their conception and interpretation of those facts vary because of fundamentally different mental attitudes.

This has been the history of religious and philosophical thought as long as men have indulged in speculation. There was a time when Jewish theology ran in the narrow channel of rabbinical hair-splitting. It was so in the time of Christ. His offense was that He filled the channel so full of the water of life that it broke over the banks and levees of rabbinical narrowness and irrigated the desert of the starved spirit. The contemporary thought-form and religious cult could not contain the abundant life and the truth He had to give. He had to put new wine into new wine-skins: the old would have burst. In fact, they did burst. The tremendous vitality of His revelation shattered

the old vessel of Judaism and overflowed the world.

Even the followers of Christ, however, could not at once break out of the channel of contemporary thought. The Apostolic Church was rent with discussion between these two types of mind. The Judaizing teachers insisted on the old rites. They dogged Paul's steps, dragging their old wine-skins after them, to bottle up, if possible, the new spiritual life in Christ. They could not think in terms of catholic Christianity. The originality of Paul's genius was his ability to break loose from the fetters of his rabbinical and ritualistic training and habit of thought and to become acclimated in the new intellectual atmosphere created by the Spirit of Christ. In the quickness and thoroughness of that mental adaptability he stood singularly alone among the apostles. He was the prophet and the Protestant of his day.

Yet, like the Protestants of Luther's day, even Paul could not wholly extricate his mind from its habits under the old régime. Traces of literalism in exegesis once in a while occur in

the swift movement of his argument, as in Galatians 3:16, where he tries to support his position by making a distinction between "seed" and "seeds." In the fourth chapter of the same letter he resorts to the old allegorical method of interpretation. He was perhaps justified in this, because it was a means of approach to a rabbinical mind—a rabbinical answer to a rabbinical argument.

What I am trying to emphasize is that the theology of any given period (the same being true of all speculative thought) is colored by the dominant intellectual conception of things prevailing at the time. The Bible is no exception. Even the New Testament is a Jewish book, although it contains a catholic religion. It is more or less Jewish in phraseology and mental attitude. The Book of Hebrews, for instance, is conceived and born with all the psychological features of a Hebrew mind reared in the atmosphere of ritualism, although its very purpose is to show the inefficacy of that antiquated ritualism. Its whole argument is cast in the mold of sacerdotalism and the institution of sacrifice.

The Biblical doctrine of the atonement is no exception to what has been said. More, perhaps, than any other Christian doctrine it has been colored by Jewish ceremonialism, because, by its very nature, it can be so easily expressed, especially to Jews, to whom most of the Epistles were addressed, in sacrificial and sacerdotal language. Those who insist on the letter of the New Testament in formulating theories of atonement will do well to remember these things, and also to remember that as general conceptions of society and the universe change, the phraseology and intellectual setting of theology will change.

After the apostolic days theology was even more modified by the prevailing human interest of the times. Augustine, the giant among theologians, measured by his influence, lived in the years when the stupendous Roman Empire was tottering to its fall. For centuries her emperors had dominated the world. Her imperial sovereignty had filled the thought of civilized men like a great mountain rising abruptly out of a vast plain. Sovereignty of Cæsar had become the habitual thought of civilized man. But

in Augustine's day that sovereignty was rocking on its pedestal. Jerome, the great scholar, troubled at the prospect of the empire's dissolution, exclaimed, "Who is safe when Rome falls?" Augustine, undismayed, proclaimed in his "City of God" that God is absolute Sovereign and that the Church is the successor of the dying empire. His theology was built upon the analogy of the empire. Augustine's God was absolute monarch, arbitrarily electing the saved and the damned, a kind of exalted Roman emperor, having arbirtrary power of life and death. This view prevailed until the era of popular government began. With constitutional republicanism came a strong popular drift away from stern Augustinianism and its later form, Calvinism. When men would no longer tolerate irrational absolutism in their politics, they no longer found it easy to tolerate it in their theology. Augustine's doctrine of the atonement was derived from the common experience of conflicting empires. In his thought it was God's Kingdom against the devil's, and Christ was a ransom paid to the devil. His theory was born of the

warlike spirit of the age, and has been called the "Military" theory.

Later, in the eleventh century, Anselm proposed what has been called the "Commercial" theory, or, sometimes, the "Criminal" theory. He taught that the suffering of Christ paid a debt, not to the devil, but to God for sin, which was an infinite offense against Infinite Dignity and Majesty. Here again we see the influence of exaggerated notions of the sacredness of kings and of popes. He lived in a time when punishment was common for offenses against the "law of majesty." In his theory it is not difficult to see the influence of feudalism.

Then came Grotius, a jurist, with his "Governmental" theory. This theory holds that Christ's death was not the payment of a debt, not the suffering of adequate penalty for sin due to man but assumed by Christ, but a mere exhibition of God's regard for His own law. The law is sacred, and violations of it must not be forgiven in such a way as to seem to subtract from its sacredness and supremacy. Christ died, therefore, to show that the law

must have due respect, lest sinners be encouraged to neglect or depreciate that law.

In all this we see the mind of the lawyer—and we are not ignorant of his devices. This theory has the fault not only of having no Scriptural support, but of exalting abstract law above the personality of the Lawgiver. It represents Judge, Advocate, and the prisoner arraigned as all subordinate to an abstraction called the Law—usually a good doctrine as applied to human administration of justice, but inadequate when applied to God as the Heavenly Father, as it would be absurd when applied in a human home. Its fallacy is that of abstracting an attribute of God and exalting it above God Himself, as if the light of the sun were so much more important than the sun itself. It also seems to make such a precise distinction between the Father and the Son as to remove the latter out of the realm of the Godhead. Yet the purpose of this paragraph is not to criticise the theory of Grotius so much as to illustrate how theories of Christ's atoning and redeeming work are affected by habitual mental attitudes—how

the same fact underlying the theories may be variously distorted by the mental spectacles worn by the observers, and how, if the truth is to be discovered, we must make allowance for what astronomers call the "personal equation."

CHAPTER II

The Modern Point of View

Chapter II

THE MODERN POINT OF VIEW

ADJUSTMENT of unchanging truths to new thought-habits must forever be going on. If theology is not to become a fossil displayed in museums of intellectual history, it must be clothed in terms of our own age. If it is to command our interest, it must be fitted like a noble spire into the architectural design of the modern temple of thought, forming an integral part of the unified structure, and not built apart, like the ancient campanile, whence self-appointed watchmen of orthodoxy scan the horizon for the enemies of Zion. The seamless garment of Christ is a beautiful symbol of the truth that there are no breaks between true science, philosophy, and religion, which together form the seamless robe of Deity.

Our own age has its characteristic thought-form, its own dominating hypothesis, that inevitably shapes our thinking on nearly all sub-

jects. If theology, and, specifically, the doctrine of the atonement, is to get access to the modern mind so as to have useful relation to the life of the times, it must show itself capable of being fitted into the general scheme of the generation's thought. Then only will theology be vital and influential. Truth is practically nonexistent to the mind until it gets into the mind. The fact is objectively existent, but it is "like a star, and dwells apart," having no utility in practical life. And to get access to the mind, truth must find the point of contact, and that point of contact is the mode in which people of a given period think of the universe and of society.

What, then, is the habit of the modern mind? First of all, the all-dominating hypothesis is Evolution. The modern mind, as a whole, is as thoroughly convinced that the universe, organic and inorganic, is a growth, a development, as it is convinced of the universal validity of the law of gravitation. Just *how* the universe has evolved into its present form none are so presumptuous as to say in a tone of final au-

thority; but *that* it has evolved is almost unanimously agreed among those who have, by their investigation, a right to an opinion. Not all the factors of the evolutionary process are determined, but the process is. Whether the indwelling cause of evolution be personal or impersonal may be a *casus belli,* but not the fact of evolution. Whether progression or regression has been by minute variations alone, or occasionally by sudden leaps, or "sports," may be open to discussion, but not the hypothesis that higher forms have evolved out of lower forms, or, sometimes, the reverse. Darwin did not simply invent a new theory; he flooded the mind of man with a cosmic vision.

That vision will not soon be dispelled. It may possibly be a false light, a mirage; but this age is convinced that it is true; and nothing short of an intellectual cataclysm can dislodge the conviction. Astronomers unanimously accept the dictum that the solar systems have grown out of formless antecedents. Spiral nebulæ were the morning stars that sang together the prophetic oratorio of coming worlds. The

geologist takes up the tale where the astronomer leaves off, telling in scientific demonstration of an earth once "waste and void," corroborating the brief statement of the wonderful old Bible. He tells us that Mother Earth herself has grown from childhood, through a turbulent and volcanic youth, to her present settled and prolific maternity. Le Conte, in his "Elements of Geology," says: "Evolution is the central idea of geology. It is this idea alone which makes geology a distinct science. This is the cohesive principle which unites and gives significance to all the scattered facts of geology—which cements what would otherwise be a mere incoherent pile of rubbish into a solid and symmetrical edifice."

The biologist then takes up the wondrous tale, and avers that living organisms are obedient to the same law; that the ancestry even of the aristocratic mammalia, including royal Man, had a plebeian origin; that the richness and abundance of modern life is the outcome of the stern discipline of the compulsory education law imposed by environment; that the "one far-off, divine event" of astronomy, geology, and biology

was to make a conqueror, a victorious personality—MAN.

Thus also speaks the Bible: Man, the apex of creation—the final fruit of "the earnest expectation of the creation waiting for the revealing of the sons of God . . . in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only so, but ourselves also, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to-wit, the redemption of our body." (Rom. 8: 19-23.) Is there a finer statement of the fact of evolution, though perhaps not intended as such in the modern sense, than these words of Paul? Man, apex of creation, made in the image of God! That is the statement of science, philosophy, and religion. From God to God is the story evolution has to tell. "From whom, through whom, and unto whom are all things." Biology and the Bible both declare Man to be

the culmination of creation; and our religion makes Christ the culminating point of humanity, the single point where the Creator's original purpose and His age-long process return to Himself in the God-Man—Jesus Christ, Son of God, Son of man, completing the circle from God to God. Christ is the first Cause and final Cause—"Alpha and Omega."

Biology, however, stops at the point where the animal became human. It stops with the evolution of the physical equipment of the human animal. There History lights her torch and adds to the illumination. She tells us that civilization is a growth from coarse, brutal antecedents. Out of savagery, by slow accumulations, has come Christian society—the very Kingdom of God. Anthropology, philology, and the social sciences have no scientific standing apart from some theory of evolution. Even the Bible student, whether conservative or liberal, to-day accepts the doctrine of "Progressive Revelation" as the point of departure in Biblical interpretation and criticism. No history of any

department of human life which ignores the fact of evolution could to-day be written.

Not only is all thought of our century cast in the evolutionary mold, but the modern mind believes tenaciously in the unity of the universe. It has taken man a long time to gather up the dissevered fragments of his thought and combine them into one related whole. He has not yet finished the task; but he is convinced that the unity exists, if only he could see a little more clearly.

Newton made an enormous stride toward unifying human thought in his discovery of the law of gravitation. At once flashed upon the human mind a vision of the hitherto fragmentary heavens bound into unity by obedience to one unvarying law, held in beautiful mathematical harmony by one omnipresent power. Later came the demonstration of the conservation of force and the correlation of forces—another gigantic step toward the essential unity of things. Then came Darwin, unifying the confusing diversity of the animate world by relating the

species. Herbert Spencer and others then applied the development theory to philosophy. And now the chemists and physicists seem to be going over to the theory of the ultimate identity of the chemical elements. Mediæval alchemy contained a dim dream of the truth; for, while base metals have not been turned into gold, uranium produces radium, radium changes into helium, and copper into lithium; and scientists are now talking about "electrons" and "corpuscles" as the ultimate units of all matter. To-day, therefore, the unity of the universe is a doctrine worthy of all acceptation, and "one increasing purpose" is read between the lines in the interpretation of all phenomena.

The story is told that Apollo once made a lovely statue and then withdrew from earth. In looting the city where this ideal statue was, some soldiers broke the statue, a soldier from Sparta taking away a hand, a man of Thebes a foot, an Ephesian taking a broken arm, while an Athenian took the mutilated torso. After the lapse of years the origin of the fragments was forgotten, but each city owning a piece

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recognized the perfection of its own fragment. Restorations were made by art critics in each of the cities on the basis of these pieces. After a while a kind of art fair was held in Athens, and these restored statues were brought to the exhibition, where lectures were given upon them, each lecturer contending for the superiority of his own restoration. Suddenly a stranger appeared, who suggested that perhaps if the fragments upon which these restorations had been made should be brought together, it would be found that they all belonged to the same original statue. They jeered the suggestion and turned in scorn away. A few, however, remained and challenged the stranger to take the fragments and prove his theory. O wonder of wonders! As he fitted arm to shoulder and hand to wrist and foot to limb, the surprise of the artists knew no measure; and when at last the stranger crowned the torso by placing upon it the beautiful head, the artists fell upon their knees in ecstasy and adoration. The stranger vanished; but afterward they remembered that the face of the statue was the face of him who had restored it.

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When the dissevered fragments of our knowledge are at last put together in the light of our faith in the unity of the universe, it will be found our faith was justified and that the universe bears the image of Him who made it, "from whom, through whom, and unto whom are all things."

The mental attitude of our time is, thirdly, increasingly humanitarian. Social problems largely occupy the thought of our century. Within the century the growing humaneness has banished many a social abuse and accomplished many reforms. Slavery has mostly disappeared. Better conditions exist for the laboring classes, and are steadily improving. Agitations for protection of childhood are continuous and vigorous. Because of the growing humaneness, the cry, "The saloon must go," is raised with determined insistence. Because of the increasing valuation of human life, war is slowly retreating into the distance. Judicial penalties are less brutal and vindictive than formerly. A new spirit has come upon us in the treatment of criminals. Punishment of the criminal for the

purpose of his reform is an idea growing in prominence. All dependent classes are treated with humaneness far in advance of any former time. The brotherhood of man grows. The Christian doctrine of God's Fatherhood is more and more being turned to practical account in the practice of brotherliness.

Evolution and the Christian religion come together, therefore, in the spirit of this age in its high valuation of humanity. Centuries before evolution was seriously thought of, Christ taught the supreme value of a human soul. Then came corroboration and emphasis in the scientific vision that the groaning and travail of the world was largely for the purpose of giving birth to the human soul. Surely, then, what has taken age-long labor and suffering to produce must be of incalculable worth; and as never before we see that the Christian religion, in its estimate of man, is based on cosmic principles. We seem to see now that the Father-Creator has been subjecting His world to severe discipline that He might make us more than conquerors—strong personal spirits in His own image. And we seem

to see also that from the beginning until now He has been in His world, guiding the process with intelligent purpose.

Now, if the Christian doctrine of the atonement is to get access to the modern mind, it must be expressed in such a way as to fit into the thought-scheme above described. People must see, in harmony with their notion of the unity of the universe, that the atonement is not a disjointed and academic affair of cloistered doctors of divinity, but a cosmic fact. In harmony with notions of evolution, it must be shown to modern folks that the cross of Christ is the completion of a cosmic law having its manifestations not only in one event of history, but also in the ordinary human world and even in the sub-human world; that it is the culmination of something that has gone before. To satisfy the humanitarian spirit of the age, the doctrine of the atonement, as well as all theology, must be built on the doctrine of God as Father—such a Father as Jesus revealed. Can the Christian doctrine of atonement be so related without doing violence to the plain facts of the Christian Scriptures? That is the task before us.

CHAPTER III

The Christ of the New Testament

"His name shall be called Wonderful."
—Isa. 9:6.

Chapter III

THE CHRIST OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

APART from all explanations stands the fact of Jesus Christ. A unique and majestic figure is He who walks through the pages of the New Testament. It is not strange that all attempted explanations of Him and His work appear inadequate. Truly His name is called "Wonderful." The New Testament never falters in its bold delineation of the Savior of the world. It has an almost incredible story to tell, but tells it with such evident sincerity, confidence, and simplicity as to compel belief.

Jesus Christ, declared to be pre-existent, coeternal with the Father-Creator, is alleged to have been conceived by the Divine Spirit and born of Mary, a Jewish virgin. He is declared by the disciple who knew Him best to have been the Divine Logos, the very Word of God. He was born in peculiarly humble surroundings, of a peasant virgin, in a stable of an Oriental khan

at Bethlehem. Of His childhood little is known except the circumstances of His birth, the brief sojourn in Egypt in order to escape bloodthirsty Herod, and His subsequent residence in Nazareth with His mother and her husband, Joseph, a carpenter. One incident only is given of His youth: His visit to Jerusalem at the age of twelve with His parents, and His conversation with the scribes in the temple. The simple, unaffected accounts of His childhood and youth by the evangelists are remarkable for what they omit. If His later alleged miracles have no foundation in fact except the mythological tendencies of the Gospel writers, as some critics aver, how shall we account for the total abstinence, after the events connected with His birth, of any narrative of wonderful doings of this supernatural Boy? This absence of myth is strong evidence of the veracity of the writers.

About the age of thirty He was baptized by John Baptist at the Jordan. Very soon afterward He went into a few weeks' retirement in the lonely wilderness, where He suffered three kinds of temptation, but yielded to none. This

uninterrupted victory over strong appeals of evil was an outstanding feature of His life. He is portrayed as the Sinless Man, and all subsequent generations have approved the portrait. He Himself challenged His enemies to convict Him of sin, and the only charges they made were to His advantage: "He eateth with publicans and sinners," and "He made Himself the Son of God." True or false, the portrait is a miracle. If it is true, it is a perpetual wonder eliciting the adoration of all people; if it be false, it is equally hard to explain where the four evangelists got their model. Certainly not out of their own imaginations. Possibly one lofty genius might have hit upon such a conception—though that is not probable; but how could four contemporaries, writing apart, have hit upon so uniform and unique a picture? There is only one reasonable explanation: they knew the Original.

This Man, after His retreat into the wilds, emerged to begin a remarkable career. He went from place to place, followed by a few disciples, teaching people of all classes concerning the

moral and spiritual Kingdom. Matthew in brief epitome gives the story of His life: "And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the Kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness. But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd." (Matt. 9:35, 36.) Helpfulness, kindness, compassion, humble condescension to the lowly attended Him as ministering angels wherever He went. He reserved His severity for the proud, selfish, self-satisfied aristocrat; His gentleness for the repentant outcast, the burdened poor, the sick and suffering, the honest seeker for truth. He wept at human graves, and on three recorded occasions raised the dead. Terrible as Jove's thunder when aroused to moral indignation, He could soothe aching hearts with words more tender than the cooing of the mourning dove, sweeter than the plaintive, far-away tones of a great organ. He was the humblest, most condescending of men, making no artificial distinctions between class

and class, or man and man, yet He made the astounding claim that He was sent from heaven as the special Spokesman of the Father, the very Son of God, one with the Father-Creator. "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no one cometh unto the Father but by Me,"—"He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father," is the unfaltering declaration of His lips and His life. Never was such humility of life so harmoniously united with such lofty personal claims, and in a manner that never jars our sense of proportion. His affirmations about His personality, together with His popularity with the common people, however, brought Him into conflict with the ruling hierarchy, and He was, through envy, hate, bribery, perjury, and the most nefarious mistrials, brought to crucifixion.

On the night before His crucifixion He instituted a unique ceremony. While eating the last meal with His disciples, He took bread and broke it and gave to each of them, saying, "Take, eat; this is My body, which was broken for you." Likewise, after supper He took a cup of wine and bade them all drink of it, say-

ing, "This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins." That night, in agony of prayer and bloody sweat, "the Savior wrestles alone with fears"—"for others' guilt the Man of Sorrows weeps in blood." That night He was betrayed by a disciple, was arrested by a mongrel mob, and, after a judicial outrage in the Jewish court, He died on the cross between two criminals, His last words being, "It is finished." He was buried, and on the third day rose from the dead, appeared several times to His followers, and about forty days later visibly ascended from the earth. A few days after this event a strange illumination and unction came upon the waiting Christians, and from that day to this the apostles and their successors have preached through this Man's death the forgiveness of human sin, salvation from moral evil, and final redemption from all human ills. From the day of Pentecost to the "Amen" of the Book of Revelation, on every page of the New Testament is written the pathetic and consoling melody, "Christ died for our sins."

Wonderful old story! How it has stirred millions of human hearts and softened them into tenderness and goodness! What does it all mean?

CHAPTER IV

What is the Christian Doctrine of Atonement?

Chapter IV

WHAT IS THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT?

"THIS is My blood of the covenant, which is shed for many unto remission of sins."—Matt. 26:28.

"Christ died for our sins."—1 Cor. 15:3.

"Who His own self bare our sins in His body upon the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed."—1 Peter 2:24.

"Now once at the end of the ages hath He been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."—Heb. 9:26.

"In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses."—Eph. 1:7.

"While we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son."—Rom. 5:10.

"There is one God, one Mediator also between God and men, Himself man, Christ Jesus,

who gave Himself a ransom for all."—1 Tim. 2:5, 6.

"Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity."—Titus 2:14.

"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life."—John 3:16.

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."—1 John 4:10.

"God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses."—2 Cor. 5:19.

"If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanseth us from all sin."—1 John 1:7.

"All have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in His blood."—Rom. 3:23-25.

"It was the good pleasure of the Father that

in Him should all the fullness dwell; and through Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things upon the earth, or things in the heavens. And you, being in time past alienated and enemies in your mind in your evil works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and without blemish and unreprovable before Him.''—Colos. 1 : 19-22.

These and many other similar passages embody the Scripture doctrine of the atonement. ''Christ died for our sins'' is the ''good news'' of the Christian revelation. The gist of New Testament teaching is that man is a sinner, alienated from God, and that the work of Christ was to reconcile God and man—to make at-one-ment. The original motive behind the manifestation of the Son of God is declared to have been the love of God; the purpose, the salvation of men from sin and spiritual death to holiness and eternal life; the method, God's incarnation of Himself as man, suffering in, with, and for His world, thus laying the foundation of recon-

ciliation between Himself and His human creatures.

The cross is very properly the symbol of the Christian faith; for in its underlying principle is to be seen the meaning of God's work for us in the person of His Son, who is "the human life of God." There is nothing in the atonement that is not in the cross of Christ. If we understand, therefore, the spiritual principle of the cross, we shall understand, as far as we can ever understand the deep things of God, the principle of the atonement; for at the cross God and man meet and are at-one, alienation ceases, reconciliation is complete.

"In the cross of Christ I glory,
Towering o'er the wrecks of time;
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime."

CHAPTER V

The Cosmic Cross

"The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."—Rev. 13:8.

Chapter V

THE COSMIC CROSS

THEORIES of atonement are devised to reconcile the two great moral attributes of God—His holiness and His love, in view of man's sin. How can God be both "just and the Justifier?" Justice and mercy have seemed to be almost irreconcilable enemies—opposites which could never be made to harmonize; for justice would seem to be the infliction of the penalty, mercy its remission.

An attempt will be made in these studies to show that Christ Jesus is Himself the revealed reconciliation of these two seemingly contradictory attributes of God; that in Him the holy love of God comes to its highest manifestation; that in Him certain cosmic laws find their fulfillment and their harmony. It may seem at first that the discussion is taking us far afield; but all paths will, we hope, meet at the Cross.

At the very first, therefore, let it be emphasized that the cross is not something which has been superimposed upon this human world. It has not rudely burst into the cosmic system like a flaming meteor coming from unknown regions beyond our planetary system, startling us a while, then passing out of all relation to us. The cross of Christ is the focus where fundamental and primal cosmic laws, seemingly divergent, meet and harmonize, as the dissevered colors of the spectrum may be gathered by a prism into one harmonious ray of white light. The cross is the culmination of the age-long cosmic process, the fulfilling of the law, not an artificial device to beat the world or the devil, or to lay a flattering unction to the divine conscience; for, indeed, some theories of the atonement come nigh unto making God guilty of the subterfuges by which a Chinaman "saves his face."

If the Creator has been vitally in His world from the beginning until now, certainly we should expect the cosmos to express that indwelling Mind. While humanity, as the upper

stratum of earthly creation, would reasonably be expected to manifest most clearly the divine thought or word, it would be strange indeed if all lower strata of creation should speak no whisper of God's moral character. The New Testament insists that the Christ is the Word of God through whom and unto whom all things have been created. "All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that hath been made . . . and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us . . . full of grace and truth." (John.) "God hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son . . . through whom also He made the worlds." (Author of Hebrews.) "The Son of His love in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins: who is the image of the invisible God, the first born of all creation; for in Him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and invisible . . . all things have been created through Him and unto Him; and He is before all things, and in Him all things consist." (Paul.)

What can these great sayings mean, if not that the Christ of history is the human incarnation and focusing of the Logos that is in all creation from the beginning? The Christ-principle is, according to the Scriptures, in the whole cosmos. The divine thought and character are on all things created. "Heaven and earth are full of His glory"—that is, His character. "He was in the world, and the world was made through Him;" but, though He has always been here, "the world knew Him not," because of its spiritual blindness.

Certainly, then, the cross is more than an incident of human history at a point of time. It is a cosmic principle; and this is what gives the death of Jesus its tremendous significance.

CHAPTER VI

The Cosmic Root of Holiness

"If we are faithless, He abideth faithful; for He can not deny Himself."—2 Tim. 2:13.

Chapter VI

THE COSMIC ROOT OF HOLINESS

THE biologist has discovered the parallel operation of two fundamental laws, the first being the law of the Struggle for Life, and the second, the law of the Struggle for the Life of Others. In these two equally important and primary laws of nature, I believe, are to be found the germ and the lower stages of what, in the moral sphere, we call Holiness and Love.

The first of these biological laws to attract the attention of scientists was the Struggle for Life and the Survival of the Fittest. Darwin's name will forever be associated with the exposition of this law in the "Origin of Species." Darwinianism has been greatly modified and added to by later investigation; other factors in the evolutionary process besides natural selection have been discovered and are now emphasized; but the great law which Darwin ex-

pounded still holds its place as one of the premises of biology.

What is this law? Briefly this: (1) Living substance, called Protoplasm, has a native tendency to vary. Organisms made of protoplasmic cells vary from one another. The offspring is always a little different from the parents, one seed or one child differing from another, even of the same parentage.

(2) The second fact is, that every living being begins its life in a certain environment. Enveloping it are air, light, heat, and other things in varying conditions and quantities. It must eat; and there are some things it can eat, and some it can not. There are certain physical and chemical facts which it meets. Every living creature is not sufficient unto itself, but is a related being—related to a complex world.

(3) The third fact is that in order to live and reproduce, a living being must be more or less in harmony with its environment. It must be "reconciled." "Alienation" from its world, by lack of adaptation to the factors upon which its being depends, is death. If it can endure

the degree of light, or temperature, for instance, in which it is placed, if it can assimilate any of the matter about it as food, if it can resist successfully its living enemies, it can live and reproduce. If it be ill-adapted to its world, it dies.

(4) Another fact is that, in the endless variations among living beings, some are natively better adapted to endure stress upon their powers of resistance than others. In times when the stress is great the "fittest," that is, those that fit the best, live, while others die. Those that live reproduce, and, by the law that the characteristics of parents are likely to be transmitted to offspring, those characteristics that best fit living beings to their world are passed on to accumulate as the generations come and go. Thus comes about a "selection" by nature of the beings that best fit their environment.

An illustration may help to make this law clearer to those unaccustomed to biological study. How did the giraffe get his long neck and forelegs? The history of his peculiarities can be imagined thus: Mr. Darwin assumes that the

ancestors of the giraffe doubtless had neck and forelegs of ordinary length, like an antelope. It was a grazing or browsing animal. Its habitat is a land subject to severe droughts, so that occasionally all herbage except the tall, deeply-rooted trees is dried up. In such cases, if these short-necked grazing and browsing animals could not reach the leaves of tall shrubs and trees, they must perish. But if some happened to have little longer necks or forelegs, or both, it can readily be seen that they could survive the longest, because they could reach the highest. These fortunate survivors would be the only ones left to perpetuate their species. By the law of heredity their offspring would tend to the possession of long necks and forelegs. Besides, these long necks and legs give the animal the ability to detect an enemy. So after many generations, during which this selective process was going on, long necks and forelegs became the fashion in giraffe society.

This is what is meant by the terms, "Struggle for Life," "Survival of the Fittest," and "Natural Selection." Now it can be easily seen

that there is a steady tendency in nature to produce fitness or harmony between the organism and its world. Either the environment will modify the organism, or else the organism will modify the environment. To change the language, the aim of nature seems to be *reconciliation,* or *at-one-ment,* between the living creature and the great universe in which it lives, moves, and has its being. To be out of harmony with environment is the biological sin the wages of which is death.

Does this law operate in the human sphere? Doubtless. In primitive ages when man was barely man this biological law prevailed, and his body, according to the evolutionary theory, is the product of the forces that operate according to this law. When man ascended, by the evolution of his brain, into the world of mind, he was enabled to respond to new things in his environment. The moment he laid hold of the first tool or weapon, man entered upon a new world and a new era in his progress. The evolution of his body was arrested, the evolution of thought began. When he came to the tool-

using point of his bodily development there was little further need for adaptation to environment by changes in the mechanism of the body. Adaptation and change were now transferred from the body to the tool, and henceforth survival depended on the possession of the fittest tool or weapon—upon handiwork rather than upon the hand. Survival amidst unfriendly circumstances then depended not on adaptation of body, but upon the human mind; and the struggle for life under the law of selection was lifted into the realm of intellect.

The history of civilization is the story of that selection. Everywhere the races having the most mind have prevailed over the races of dull intellect. We are in the very midst of that process to-day. Aryans displaced the aborigines of India and of America because of superior mind. Greeks successfully resisted Persia not because of superior equipment or greater numbers, but because of higher intelligence. Rome crushed Carthage for the same reason. The American navy sunk the fleets of Spain in the recent war because the Yankees had keener in-

tellects, less clouded by hurtful personal habits, steadier nerve, greater power of personal self-control and self-direction. Manila and Santiago were battles of brains more than of bombs and bullets. The war between Japan and Russia was an issue between minds rather than battalions. Russia depended on the brute force of heavy battalions; Japan, rather, on carefully planned campaigns and strategy. Brains won.

Industry is the modern phase of the ancient struggle. Here, too, it is a battle of brains, and, speaking generally, the fittest survive. It requires a high grade of intellect to fit into this age of intricate and dangerous machinery. Just anybody can not run a locomotive, a linotype, or an airship. Just anybody can not master the intricacies of a telephone system, an insurance company, or high finance. The dull mind is out of harmony with the modern industrial system, and must lag in the race. Were it not for the operation of certain forces, moral, social, and physiological, dull-minded human beings would be swiftly eliminated by the stern law of the selection of the mentally fittest. Even

as it is, in spite of certain counteracting forces, the "child races,"—that is, the races of low intelligence—are being slowly eliminated, and where these races refuse to adapt themselves to modern environment, the sentence of death is already pronounced. American Indians, native Australians, South Sea Islanders, and native Hawaiians are obvious examples. "Think, or die" is the stern demand of this industrial and commercial age. To succeed in holding a place in our modern system of things one must be *reconciled to,* be *at one with,* the demands of an intellectual environment. Incompetency is the industrial sin the wages of which is death.

There is still another mighty factor in the environment of a human being—the ethical factor. The moral system is no less a reality than are the biological and industrial systems. Generally speaking, vice tends to limit offspring. The French people, as a nation, have been addicted to certain immoralities, with the result that the birth rate is steadily decreasing. Absinthe and adultery are doing their deadly work. Unworthy social ambitions of "society women"

make children a nuisance. Even on the human side of the moral law the demand of our social and industrial world is exacting. The moral environment in the form of statutory law forbids murder. Defy that demand of ethical environment: what is the result? You are immediately taken out of the social world by hanging or imprisonment. The business world demands honesty—however much appearances contradict the statement. Credit is the foundation of modern business, and truthfulness is the foundation of credit. At least ninety per cent of modern business is done on credit. To make this possible there must be a tremendous fund of honesty stored in the souls of men. A prominent American banker has said: "If an inhabitant of another planet could come to one of our big cities, perhaps he at first would find it ruled by the law of selfishness, the almighty dollar. Later, he would find underneath all the silent forces of righteousness. The power which sustains the business world is individual character."

He who doubts that honesty is the foundation of the tremendous business structure of

modern times should test the matter by robbing a till, embezzling funds, forging a note, juggling with the accounts of a public office, or doing dishonest labor, if nothing else will convince him. Of course, the rascal is not always caught, or convicted; but society has constructed an elaborate legal machine to catch and punish him, if possible, and he must be exceptionally shrewd or powerful to escape. And if he is caught, what is done? He is deprived of life—not always his personal life; but he is deprived of some of his wealth, of liberty, of the esteem of his fellow-men, or of a place in the economic world—all of which are essential to the life which distinguishes a man from a beast. The wages of social sin is social death.

There is more than this in the case. It is a peculiar fact, that although the immoral person escapes the clutches of human law, and continues to live in worldly prosperity, his immoral doings cause him to be strangely ill at ease with himself. His conscience hurts him. Two discordant voices jangle in his soul, one accusing, the other excusing. He is conscious of being "wrong, in-

ferior, and unhappy.'' Independent of the purely social environment, there seems to be a strange, impalpable, spiritual world that lies very close to our souls. There is ever with us, if we are normal human beings, a sense of oughtness. A higher Something, some ''Over-Soul'' attends us. A spiritual atmosphere out of which speak whispers of approval and of disapproval lies closer to us than breathing. What is that supersensuous environment but God Himself, who is in and through and above and under all things, as ether is said to pervade all grosser matter?

To be out of harmony with the recognized ethical demands of the social human world and with the demands of the spiritual world, as expressed through the conscience, is sin. The sinner is one who is unreconciled to his moral and spiritual environment. He is an outcast, ''alienated from the life of God'' and from fellowship with humanity. This alienation is spiritual death. The realization of this lack of harmony between ourselves and moral requirements is what is called ''conviction for

sin," wherein the soul is disturbed and thrown out of equilibrium just as the body is disturbed by being plunged into physical surroundings to which it is not adapted.

Holiness, on the other hand, is the harmony of the human soul with its social and religious duty. It is fitness, adaptedness, correspondence with spiritual environment. The result is a sense of reconciliation and peace. It is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. It is to love God with all one's might, and the neighbor as oneself.

It is not far-fetched, therefore, in view of the preceding discussion, to say that holiness is the highest manifestation of the cosmic law of the struggle for life and the survival of the fittest. The ideal person is one who best fits his world, viewed in its completeness. Only a whole man lives a complete life, and he only is complete who fits not only into the physical and intellectual environment, but also into the supersensuous realities of the moral and spiritual world. This latter aspect of wholeness is called holiness.

THE COSMIC ROOT OF HOLINESS

Jesus is the one human being who was from the beginning of His life continuously in perfect accord with the spiritual world. He is the apex of humanity—the fulfillment or completion of the cosmic law of required fitness manifested in the struggle for life and the survival of the fit. The law of self-preservation finds its highest and noblest instance in Him who came not to destroy the law, but to fulfill it. In Him we see a human being perfectly reconciled to the Father; and in being like Him we find the life eternal.

To say, however, that Jesus was continuously in accord with the spiritual world should not imply that strain was never put upon His spiritual nature by His sensuous nature. His senses and His soul were often in conflict. Otherwise He could not have suffered temptation. He could not have been a normal human being without that experience of tension between sense and spirit, between the real and the ideal. That tension was so great in Gethsemane that He sweat drops of blood. His perfect accord was with the will of God, not with the actual con-

ditions He found in the world, nor with the world of sense. He could not be in perfect accord with these two often opposing sets of conditions at the same time.

With the actual human world in which Jesus found Himself He was not in harmony. Sin was here. Here were covetousness, lasciviousness, hate, envy, cruelty, and the whole dire list. Into this poisoned air Jesus came, and found a moral climate to which He could never become acclimated. The prevailing spirit of His age He opposed with all His might. He was a determined nonconformist. His words and life antagonized animalism and all subtler forms of selfishness. He antagonized many of the social and religious practices of the times. He denounced in no soft language the spirit of the Pharisee and the agnostic creed of the Sadducee. His kindness and the transparent purity of His life rebuked all hard-heartedness and moral uncleanness. His democracy rebuked the aristocratic spirit which sneered because He ate with publicans and sinners and allowed a repentant harlot to touch His person. He was unrecon-

ciled to the world as He found it, and the world was unreconciled to Him.

What was the result? The immediate result was what has always happened when any being is out of joint with its surroundings: He was crushed out of the world, killed by a hostile environment. Sin slew Him, as the miasma of the swamp kills the child whose lungs were made for mountain air. Sin—the self-will of man, crossing holiness—the will of God, made the cross of Christ. Accordingly the cross makes clear revelation of the nature of holiness and of the nature of sin. It shows the fact that unregenerate humanity is unfriendly to God's highest purpose for man; that the sensuous element of human life is often at cross purposes with spiritual human life; that "the mind of the flesh is enmity against God."

The teaching of human experience and of the Christian Scriptures is that humanity is natively out of key, at least in a large measure, with the character and will of God, and that we remain out of key until we are born of the Spirit. Whether God made us so is apart from

the question. The fact remains that we are. The flesh and the spirit are often caught in the act not only of pulling against each other, but also against the will of God. Paul gives a vivid description of this battle in the seventh chapter of Romans. In Corinthians he says, "The natural (or sensuous) man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto Him; and He can not know them, because they are spiritually judged." And Jesus said, "Except a man be born anew (or from above), he can not see the Kingdom of God."

Wherefore, while the cross of Christ reveals as nothing else could the nature of man's sin, and at the same time the unbending righteousness of God, yet the matter does not end with that; for while the cross is the inevitable outcome of the disharmony between God and sinful humanity, yet by means of the cross is reconciliation between God and man to be effected, and to be effected by changing man. This change in human nature does not, indeed, remove all tension between the sensuous and the spiritual in

man, but it does remove antagonism between the will of man and the will of God. Christ energizes the spiritual in man to the point of mastery over the lower elements of human nature, or, as Paul expresses it, by His Spirit puts to death the deeds of the body and makes the soul alive unto God. Jesus came to make it possible for a godlike human being to exist and be happy in this world, not by toning down the moral standard to fit unspiritual people, but by tuning up the morals of humanity to harmonize with the character of God. He came to *take away the sin of the world* by rectifying man's will. The mission of Jesus, both in His life and in His death, was not to make any change in the higher environment of man's soul. That is nothing less than the character and will of God, which can not be altered. God's will for the individual and for society must remain constant. The work of Jesus is to transform human souls and social systems into conformity with the will of God, and so make peace. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." How this reconciliation is accomplished by the cross of

Christ will be discussed in a later chapter on "The Power of the Cross."

There can be no peace between a holy God and a sinful soul until the sinner consents to adapt himself to the moral demands of the universe. I say *consents,* because the reconciliation does not wait until the adaptation is complete, but is effected the instant the personal surrender to God is made. Reconciliation, therefore, is dependent on repentance and faith.

What the discussion has been leading up to is this—and it can not be too strongly emphasized: In the process of getting God and man together, the change in attitude must be in man, not in God. The character of God is an unchanging fact, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.

"I, Jehovah, change not."—Mal. 3:6.

"God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said, and will He not do it? or hath He spoken, and will He not make it good?"—Num. 23:19.

With the Father of lights there can be "no

variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning." God must be just; that is, He must render to every man according to his works: "to them that by patience in well-doing . . . eternal life: but to them that are factious, and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, shall be wrath and indignation." (Rom. 2:7.) To those who have the spirit of willing conformity to His law, God is love and mercy; but to those who exalt their own wills above the Universal Will, God is a consuming fire. Any creature that violates the law of its own being must suffer the consequences. Law is inexorable. The way of the transgressor is hard, and God will never make it any easier. "The wages of sin is death." The law of God being inexorable as the character of God, with which it is identical, every creature must adapt itself or die. God remains true though every man should be a liar. Neither in nature nor in morals does God temper the wind to the shorn lamb: He tempers the lamb to the cold wind. Therefore, if atonement or reconciliation is to be effected, the change must be in the spiritual organism,

not in the spiritual environment—in man, not in God.

It can not be too forcibly emphasized, in these times of easy-going and sentimental theology and of similar morality, that God is Law as well as Love. We have swung, I think, too far away from the stern puritanic sense of moral obligation. If the Puritan's God was too severe, ours is too sentimental. If the Calvinist of the older type exaggerated God's sovereignty, many now exaggerate the human will, and are raising the misleading slogan of "Personal Liberty," which is coming to mean *personal license.* If the God of the seventeenth century was too sternly masculine, the God of the twentieth is too feminine, in evidence of which I call to witness that emasculated theology called Christian Science, that mouths persistently that God is love, but "love" sapped of all discipline and ethical content. Along with this emasculation of theology has come a growing dullness in the popular sense of the sacredness of all law, human and divine. The greatest civic and political issue before the American Commonwealth to-

day is law-enforcement; for growing disregard for law is a menace recognized by all thoughtful citizens. Executive officers to-day run on platforms for or against the enforcement of law—an issue that should never be raised; for there is logically, legally, morally but one side to that question. But the fact that the popular vote divides on that issue, often resulting in the election of the candidate who publicly announces beforehand that he will not enforce certain laws, is alarming evidence that we need to revive our sense of civic and moral obligation to law. We need more sermons on fearing God and keeping His commandments. We need to reinstate in our theology a God whose will is law, and who can not be mocked by sentimental reliance on His mercy apart from our willingness to obey His plain requirements. Margaret Fuller somewhere once wrote, rather patronizingly, "I accept the universe," as if the universe should be flattered by the acceptance. Rough old Thomas Carlyle, when he heard it, exclaimed, "Gad, she 'd better!" We had better make the law of God the head of the corner, or expect

the alternative of having it fall upon us and grind us to powder.

The cross of Christ is, first of all, therefore, a revelation of the inexorableness of God's law, of the unchanging holiness of God. God must always be what He is. His very name is "I AM THAT I AM." His law is simply Himself expressed, and He can not ignore law, because He must be Himself. To abrogate, suspend, or break His own law would be to violate the principles of His own being—and that would be to sin. The life and death of Jesus show that God will not step aside from His law—will not modify His loving and righteous demands. Rather than do that, Jesus loses would-be disciples, bidding them count the cost; refuses to turn stone into bread, and at last marches steadily to crucifixion rather than depart from holiness. The cross shows God upholding "the dignity of His own law"—although not in the sense in which advocates of the Rectoral or Governmental theory of the atonement use that phrase. It reveals that God will never change His own character to save any sinner, nor a whole uni-

verse of sinners. In fact, He could not have deviated from His own character and at the same time have saved us; for God's character in man is salvation. Christ could not, therefore, be the Savior if He had been disloyal to the character of God. He would have been a sinner like the rest of us.

Man's salvation depended on Christ's maintaining the integrity of the divine character. If Christ, for instance, had yielded to the temptation to win the homage of the people by the acrobatic feat of jumping off the pinnacle of the temple without personal injury, what good moral or spiritual result would have followed? The only result would have been the admiration of a gaping crowd similar to the admiration of the sporting world for a prize-fighter or an aeronaut. If He had let Himself down from the godlike purpose of winning supremacy over the spirits of men solely by the power of His own moral and spiritual excellence, and had yielded to the subtle suggestion to secure power first by political influence, the whole battle for the salvation of the soul of man would have been lost. God

must win by the power of character alone, or not at all; and whatever miracles Christ performs must be not feats to gain the admiring wonder of an unspiritual multitude, but "signs" or *indications* of the divine character.

The cross is the undeniable evidence of the divine self-respect. Between sin and the cross, Christ chooses the cross, and thus meets the demands of His own holy character. In the death of the Divine-human Savior on Calvary, God "satisfies" Himself, offers Himself as an "oblation" or "propitiation" to the demands of His own moral being, as every martyr to conscience has done who has followed in His steps.

Although this self-propitiation of the divine character is as far above anything human as God is above man, yet it is not something altogether apart from the facts of human experience. In fact, it derives its meaning from its adumbration in human experience. The ocean is incomparably greater than a drop of spray, but the difference is one of degree, not of kind—of quantity, not quality.

History glows with instances of this moral

phenomenon of self-propitiation. In fact, self-sacrifice, even unto death, for the sake of preserving the integrity of the moral nature is the supremely interesting element of history. Joseph, wrenching himself away from the seductive wife of Potiphar in order to preserve his own chaste soul, and being imprisoned as a consequence; Daniel, deliberately defying the mouths of lions in fidelity to his religion; his three friends, choosing to be cast into the fiery furnace rather than to degrade themselves and dishonor their God by bowing to the golden idol; Moses, "choosing rather to share ill-treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season," are all familiar Old Testament examples of self-sacrifice for the propitiation and preservation of the spiritual self. The martyrs of Christian history, from Stephen to the Chinese Christians in the Boxer uprising, who, with moral grandeur unsurpassed, saw their children hideously tortured before their eyes, and submitted themselves to be hacked to pieces by inches rather than be disloyal to Christ, shine with the glory of the divine nature. Their un-

speakable torture was the cross of self-propitiation, an oblation and sacrifice to the demands of the soul. Tolstoi, renouncing all he had—property, income, title of nobility, social prestige, fleshly pleasures and passions—in the effort to satisfy the demands of a soul that had been transformed by the vision of the Christ, is a most impressive modern exhibition of the stern law of self-propitiation. How sublime appears the human soul when it grandly pays such a price for the preservation of its own integrity! The "Loyal Self" is the most interesting and significant element in all history—and the most godlike.

Paradoxical as it seems, therefore, Christ's death was the price of His self-preservation. All His life He was grievously tempted to turn aside from righteousness; but never once did He turn to the right hand or to the left. He had a work to do, a character to maintain, a soul to preserve. He might have receded from His positions, and been disloyal to His ideals; but in that case He would have put to death His Godhood and His highest manhood. To sacrifice

moral principle for lower ends is to perish at the very top of our nature. Jesus might have saved His earthly life by swerving from the straight course of truth and duty; but He would have lost His spiritual life and also failed in His saving mission if He had abandoned His principles and His purposes. He saved Himself and us by losing His earthly life; and in so doing He also condemned and defeated the sin that tempted and the sin that crucified Him; for "Good meeting evil and remaining untainted by it can alone conquer evil." (Tolstoi.)

One voice that sings triumphantly from the cross is that of Duty—

> "Stern Daughter of the Voice of God, . . .
> Thou who art victory and law
> When empty terrors overawe."

It is a voice that appeals to the heroic in human life, bidding the soul to its own self be true in spite of toil, pain, and danger. The cross is the fitting badge for the hero, the proper ensign of the Crusader in any holy cause, and of the drudging bondman of duty in the humble walks

of life; for it stands for the supremacy of righteousness, conscience, duty, for the sovereignty of the soul. "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ:" not grace alone, but truth also, and the personal character that is at all hazards loyal to truth. He who, following the example of Jesus, seeks first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, wears the cross on his heart; for whoever exalts truth and duty to first place in his life must crucify the flesh and the lusts thereof, and he will often be called upon to offer up his lower nature as an oblation and propitiation to the demands of a righteous soul. The cross is, therefore, the eternal symbol of the "Loyal Self."

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"If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whosoever would save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake shall find it."

This self-preservation or self-propitiation, manifested at the cross, however, was not for the mere satisfaction of the divine nature. "Christ

died *for us.*" He made "propitiation *for our sins.*" "For their sakes I sanctify Myself." Christ was loyal to Himself for our sakes; for by being thus true to the character of God, He became the Light of the world by which we can find our way to salvation and peace. This leads to the second part of the discussion, in which an attempt will be made to show that God's righteousness and His love blend in one; that His character is love; and that His holiness consists in fidelity to that character of love; that God abideth faithful to Himself *"for our sakes."*

CHAPTER VII

The Cosmic Root of Love

"*God is love.*"—1 John 4:8.

Chapter VII

THE COSMIC ROOT OF LOVE

THE other great law of animate nature—no less fundamental and original than the law of selection and the struggle for life —is the law of self-sacrifice for the life of others, or the law of love. It is often said that "Self-preservation is the first law of nature;" but that is incorrect. Self-preservation and race-preservation are two parallel laws of nature, or, better, two intertwining laws; for they so react, back and forth, now one dominant, now the other, in the activities of an individual that they are inextricably tangled together.

The struggle for the life of others begins down very low in the scale of animate creation. In fact, suggestions of the law are found in the inorganic realm. What is that passionate affinity of atoms for those of another element, or of atoms of the same element for one another, but a demonstration of the fact that nothing

lives unto itself or for itself? Everything seems to live not for itself alone, but for something else, and realizes itself by merging itself into a larger whole. It finds itself by losing itself.

In the animate world this law finds its first manifestation in connection with the function of reproduction. Everywhere in nature the mother gives up something of her own life for her offspring. In the lowest protean forms of plant and animal the mother-cell simply divides to produce another cell; while in the more highly organized forms it seems that the chief aim of the life of the individual is to produce and to care for other individuals.

Take, for illustration, a flowering plant. In its beginnings it seems purely selfish. During its germination it grows by the disorganizing and appropriation of the sheltering seed. After it has absorbed the nutritious tissues of the mother-seed and has produced a root and leaf of its own, it reaches into the soil and into the air and sunlight, appropriating everything it can use for its own nutrition.

But watch it: it is going somewhere. Buds

for next year's foliage and blossom are forming in the axils of its leaves, and the plant is carefully and ingeniously protecting these little buds. Then it comes to the blossom, and we observe this plant we thought had been growing in pure selfishness carefully nourishing the little ovules in its ovary until they are full-grown seeds ready to begin again this cycle of life. Having performed this function of nourishing, perfecting, and protecting its own seed-children, the mother plant dies, or goes into its periodic rest.

In the light of this result we see that the main purpose of the whole process from the beginning, though apparently selfish for much of the time, is at last to pour its life into the life of its offspring. The ultimate goal of the growing plant is not its own life, but the nurture of the seed. Every cell division, every differentiation of tissue into root, stem, leaf, flower, was for the one crowning event—the production and nurture of another living being. Some of my peach trees have literally laid down their lives in the effort to bear more fruit than their

vitality could endure. In this familiar process of fruit-bearing the chief purpose of the individual seems to be to preserve not itself primarily, but the species. The individual merges itself into the race, gives up its individual being for the life of the larger circle of beings. In all this there is no conscious effort, of course; it is a purely instinctive tendency breathed into the protoplasm of which the plant is made. But who breathed upon the protoplasm, and knew the plant's members and processes when as yet there was none of them? What is this mysterious thing we call "function," if not the Mind of the Spirit of Life—the Will of the living God? Function is spiritual purpose that guides in the organization of all living matter, an intelligent Something that gathers and molds inorganic matter to its will. Its immediate purpose seems to be self-preservation by nutrition; its final purpose is self-sacrifice for the lives of others.

There is also another aspect of the vicarious principle in the vegetable kingdom. Why should plants live and grow at all? Is it worth while

for them to go through this eternal cycle of growth and reproduction? No, unless some higher purpose is served. That higher purpose is the furnishing of food for animals. All animal life depends on vegetable life. The cow eats grass, and man eats the cow and drinks her milk. Herbage gives up its life to build a higher order of life.

Professor William James, in his essay, "Is Life Worth Living?" has turned this fact of the sacrifice of the lower for the benefit of the higher to good moral advantage in this striking paragraph: "Realize how many innocent beasts have had to suffer in cattle-cars and slaughter-pens and lay down their lives that we might grow up, all fattened and clad. Does not the acceptance of a happy life upon such terms involve a point of honor? Are we not bound to take some suffering upon ourselves, to do some self-denying service with our lives, in return for all those lives upon which ours are built?"

The higher the order of life, the more definite is the vicarious principle. In the animal kingdom the operation of this principle is still more

obvious than in the vegetable kingdom. Among animals the more dependent and helpless the offspring is when coming into the world, and the longer that period of helplessness, the more clearly is the vicarious principle manifested. A hen is almost pure coward and egoist, looking out solely for her own welfare, until she begins to sit; then she becomes vigorously combative in defense of her nest. When the helpless chicks arrive the selfish hen has become completely transformed from a shy, timorous, gluttonous fowl to a courageous, combative ball of fuss and feathers, daring to fight an enemy twenty times her size; and, in her tender care for her little ones, she will not eat, though she be half starved from her long fasting, until the little chicks have eaten their fill. Now she is all unselfishness, losing herself in the helpless lives of others.

"Though Nature, red in tooth and claw
With ravine, shrieks against our creed—"

yet Nature has other voices than a shriek. She sings also the lover's song and the mother's lullaby. Bloody sacrifice, heartless cruelty, pain,

savagery, and selfishness exist; but even in the sub-human world we see, both in plant and animal, the heart of the mother, self-forgetful devotion to the life of another. In a word, love is there in embryo. The brute mother will in many instances sacrifice her life for her offspring; the male will, in numberless cases, fight both for his young and for his mate. Self-sacrifice for the lives of others is a law of nature; and if precedence is to be given to either, it must be given, even in the sub-human world, to loving self-sacrifice rather than to self-preservation; for everywhere we see the individual losing itself in the race, subordinating its own life to the perpetuation of the species.

In the animate creation below man, however, the scope of the struggle for the life of others is limited to a comparatively narrow circle—to the relation between mates, or parent and offspring, or, in many cases, between members of the same colony, as among bees and ants. Bees will defend their hive with their own lives. Ants toil with indefatigable industry for the colony, and will often care tenderly for a wounded mem-

ber of the colony. Outside of these narrow circles, as far as I know, the law does not operate to any considerable extent, although instances can be found where it does. The law is in the sub-human sphere, but it is not fulfilled.

Much wider is the scope of the operation of this principle of altruism in the human world. How large a place vicarious self-sacrifice fills in ordinary human life! Love stories comprise at least nine-tenths of all fictitious literature, and fiction is by far the most popular of all forms of literature, partly because the prevailing topic is love. How divinely self-forgetful is the love of a pure maiden for a gallant youth! *Romeo and Juliet* is true to the human heart at its best. True love between the sexes is an exhibition of the law of finding life by losing it. Love lives by self-sacrifice, gets by giving.

Still more beautiful, more divinely bright, is the love of parent and child. What is more typical of divinity than David mourning for Absalom? Where can be found a more pathetic expression of the vicarious principle in the human heart than the heart-breaking lament: "O

my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!''

The peculiarity of the affection existing between human parents and offspring is that it normally outlasts life, often with increasing depth and tenderness. Especially is this increase of affection shown in the love of children toward the parent; for grown children often exhibit a devotion to their parents which they did not have in early life. Maternal feeling among brutes generally terminates with weaning. After that the offspring is generally treated by the mother as a heathen and a publican. A weaned colt is no dearer to the dam than is any other horse. Not so with human parenthood. Parental or filial affection is normally a sentiment lasting through life and longer. Devotion does not die with dependence the one on the other. Nothing human is so enduring, so forgetful of self, so forgiving, so vicarious, as mother-love. A gentleman who has served on the Illinois State Board of Pardons for more than twenty years told me that the forgiving

and self-forgetful devotion of women to imprisoned fathers, husbands, sons, or brothers was to him a constant marvel. He told of a poor old mother who had been neglected and cruelly beaten by a drunken and criminal son, who at last fetched up in the penitentiary. Nevertheless the old mother, apparently forgetful of all this brutality, continued to make the most pitiful intercession for his parole. She lived to make intercession for him.

The vicarious principle in human life, however, is not confined to the domestic relations. Have not soldiers always died for their tribe or their country, losing self for the welfare of the social organism? The story of Regulus, of the three hundred Spartans at Thermopylæ, of Arnold von Winkelried, of Nathan Hale, and thousands of others, attest the existence of the vicarious principle in the history of patriotism.

Sacrifice equally heroic shines resplendent in many a tale of scientific and professional devotion. Dr. Thompson remained alone all night on the battlefield of Alma trying to alleviate the sufferings not only of his countrymen, but of

their foes. Dr. Hay displayed the same heroism at Benares when the terrible Sepoys were advancing to the massacre of every foreigner. He did not desert the patients in the hospital, even though he knew to stay was to die. Time would fail me to tell of martyrs to truth, of heroes and heroines who have suffered and died for others, actuated by principles of patriotism, duty, and religion. These loving deeds of self-sacrifice are daily performed with no thought of notoriety or personal glory. All ages and nations have been adorned with these "Golden Deeds" done in obedience to the vicarious principle.

Vicariousness is a cosmic principle—the very word of God, writ large on the face of the whole earth, graven deep into the whole creation. But, like the law of required fitness, this law of love is not fulfilled until "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" in the Divine Man, Christ Jesus, who was the very incarnation of these two principles. In His life He "went about doing good" with never a thought of escaping pain Himself, but ever with the purpose of relieving

the physical and spiritual pain of others. Other folks and their needs filled His thoughts. For others He lived and died. From first to last He lost His life in the lives of others. He identified Himself with the race, putting Himself *at-one* with us. Christ in His very nature is at-one-ment: in His holiness at one with God, in His love at one with us, identifying Himself on one hand with the Father in the matter of character, and with us on the other in the matter of need. His saying, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto these My brethren, even these least, ye did it unto Me," shows how completely He identified Himself with us. He is accordingly the Son of God and Son of man, for He is identified both with God and man. Those who live selfish lives, neglecting to clothe the naked, feed the hungry, visit the suffering, put themselves out of harmony with Christ and with the universal law of vicarious sacrifice. They are the unreconciled, the unforgiven. Christ died for these selfish folk, but they refuse to make any sacrifice for Him and His brethren. They refuse the cross. Thus they become outsiders in the universe and are

cast into outer darkness like wandering meteors that have lost their orbit. They are the real anti-Christs, opposing themselves to the cosmic law of love; and their destiny is that of the unfit.

The cross is where the vicarious principle comes to its climax. It is the fulfillment of the cosmic law. The death of the Incarnate Word on the cross is the supreme manifestation of the struggle for the life of others, the love-principle at high tide. It is God putting His seal on the universal law—sealing it in His own blood. At Calvary we see the enlargement—the completion —of the vicarious spirit that has been traced from inanimate matter up to man. We have seen its scope widening as we came up to the cross. There we see the horizon enlarge to infinity so as to comprehend every sinner. In the sub-human world we have seen it operating temporarily, and mostly in connection with the function of reproduction. In the human world it enlarges in duration and scope, so as to include relations outside those involved in reproduction. In the cross of Christ self-sacrifice

reaches a depth of suffering beyond our natural experiences, and leaps beyond the limit of family, friends, and nation, until it embraces a rebellious and unholy race. "For the good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

The sign of the cross is on every molecule, on every living cell, on every organism, on every soul; but it is more or less blurred and indistinct. On Calvary the cross-principle glows with supernatural light, with the very glory of God. There we begin to "apprehend what is the breadth and length and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge."

God, by the cross of Christ, shows that He, too, is in harmony with the principle of suffering for others. Obviously, therefore, the only way in which we can become reconciled to God is to take up the cross of self-denying service and follow Jesus. The moment one makes choice of such a life and abandons selfishness as the ruling motive of life, he is born anew, becomes "partaker of the divine nature," is reconciled

to the universal law, and is at peace with God. That moment is divine grace made effectual in him and for him; or, to use the condensed and symbolic language of Scripture, "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses him from all sin."

The inference should not be drawn from the above paragraph that atonement is simply following Christ in self-sacrifice—that it is an affair of mere imitation. The atonement for our sins is vastly more vital and fundamental than merely following Christ. Atonement is rooted in the grace of God; and the grace of God is no mere shimmering beauty on the surface of things: it is the very heart of Deity that went to the last conceivable limit to express itself in the suffering and death of Christ. It is a matter of blood and anguish. This is Deity's part in the making of peace. But we mean to say that all that God has done for us in the death of Christ is of no avail unless we apply to ourselves as a principle of moral conduct the divine principle of loyalty and love involved in the death of the Savior. We do not imply that atonement is effected by simply following Christ, but that no atonement

is effective without following Him. The death of Christ is the seal of a New Covenant, and a covenant implies obligations on both sides. God has done His moral duty to His ignorant and sinful creatures by revealing His righteousness and grace at terrible cost to Himself. But it is all in vain to the human being who refuses to be loyal to truth and helpful to his fellows. This is so plain as to need no argument. Christ's words are not of doubtful import: "Whosoever doth not bear his own cross, and come after Me, can not be My disciple."

The cross is, then, the climax of the universal plan. Here God is revealed as the Sufferer. Here He is wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, and suffers the chastisement of our peace. "In all their afflictions He was afflicted." Were it otherwise, God would be outside of our life and experience. He would be an outsider to whom we could never be reconciled; for we could not love a God who would entail vicarious suffering upon His world, and make Himself a blissful exception to the rule.

Christ's symbolic name is Immanuel—"God with us;" and He is a High Priest that can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. To be our Strength, our Help, our Comforter, our Redeemer, God must suffer with us, and for us, and *we must know that He does.* That He does graciously suffer the death of Christ assures us.

Here, we remark incidentally, is the fundamental falsity of "Christian Science." It denies all this. It is a bloodless, painless philosophy, with no vicariousness, no discipline, no cross. Its major premise is a lie; for it assumes that God can not suffer. Consequently its conclusions are in the main false. Eddyism denies the cross of Christ, which is the essence of Christianity.

Christianity is not merely a world-religion: it is a cosmic religion. Its roots are in the very nature of things. The principle of the cross is a cosmic principle equally with the law of gravitation or the laws of heredity. This fact was clearly indicated by Christ when the Greeks came to Philip saying, "Sir, we would see Jesus." On first thought the Savior's reply to

that request seems quite irrelevant: "The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit. He that loveth his life loseth it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." What mean these queer words? Why, this: If you would see Jesus, look into the heart of a grain of wheat, dying—losing itself—that the life of another might be nourished, hating its individual life, that it may be passed on multiplied. In other words, the sign of the cross is on the little heart of a grain of wheat; the cross is a fact of the cosmos seen not only in the crucifixion, but in all life. The parable of the unfruitful tree emphasizes the same truth. These teachings emphasize that Christ is in His world. His name is Immanuel—"God with us." "Without Him was not anything made that hath been made." The cross was in the beginning with God, and has all along been in the world which He hath made. The

cross is the manifestation of an eternal principle; Jesus is "the Lamb that hath been slain from the foundation of the world."* The seer of Patmos beheld the apocalypse of this principle of the altruistic personality loyal to itself where he sees, "in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain." (Rev. 5:6.) What does this vision set forth, if not that the principle of the blood is at the very center of things—enthroned in the heart of Deity, symbolized by the throne; in the creation, symbolized by the four creatures; and in the Church, represented by the elders? To this principle on the throne of the universe every knee bows of things in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and "every created thing" chants anthems of worship: for this self-

*(It is not easy to see why the American Revisers made the phrase, "from the foundation of the world," modify "written." instead of "slain." The translation of the King James, British Revised, Luther's German, Latin Vulgate, Douay, and others, is in the American Standard relegated to the margin. The order of words in the Greek would certainly suggest that the phrase belongs to "slain.")

respecting, self-denying love is alone worthy and able to open the seals of the Book of Life, and to reveal the meaning of things human and divine. In the light of this truth we see light; for it is the key to the interpretation of life and religion.

CHAPTER VIII

The Principle of the Cross

"Behold then the goodness and severity of God."
Romans 11 : 22.

Chapter VIII

THE PRINCIPLE OF THE CROSS

THE principle of the cross has been expounded in the two preceding chapters; but it is well to bring the two lines of exposition together by further discussion. Perhaps it is already plain that the law of self-preservation and the law of self-sacrifice come into perfect harmony at the cross of Christ; that egoism and altruism, in their higher forms, co-exist and co-operate, and are not mutually exclusive. Law and love meet at the cross and are reconciled; for there the inexorable character of God is shown to be love. "All 's love, yet all 's law." At the cross we see the divine egoism manifested as inflexible righteousness. There we behold God being true to Himself at cost of intense anguish. The cross, in Scripture language, was "for the showing of His righteousness at this present season: that He might Himself be *righteous* and the *maker righteous*

of him that hath faith in Jesus." (Rom. 3:26.) The English version translates the word *dikaion* as "just," with "righteous" in the margin as an alternative. It is somewhat difficult to see why the revisers did not adhere to their rule of translating the same Greek word by the same English word, for the Greek word translated sometimes "righteous" and sometimes "just" is the same throughout the third chapter of Romans. There is a distinction between "just" and "righteous," the latter being the broader term including the other. It would have been less confusing if "righteous" had been put in the body of the text, although that would have involved the difficulty of finding a corresponding English word to use instead of "Justifier," which immediately follows; for "maker righteous" is neither elegant nor idiomatic.

It is worth repeating that the cross of Calvary is revelation of God's self-respect, and is the price paid for His self-preservation. It is the manifestation of egoism in its truest and best sense. It was a case of choice of environment. Christ might have yielded to the seductive

voice of the prince of this world and saved His physical life; He might have chosen to adapt Himself to this world; but He responded to the demands of another world, and chose the spiritual environment. He denied His lower nature in the struggle to maintain His character and save His soul. He could not have saved us if He had not. Without obedience to the law of His own moral being His love for us would have been empty, valueless, and ineffective; for it is holiness that gives meaning, value, and power to love.

Any theory of the atonement that makes the death of Christ an occasion for any change in the attitude of the Father toward His law or toward us seems to me false. The Savior's death was not to allay divine resentment against sin or sinners, not to appease God's anger, not to satisfy vindictive justice, not to make any change in the divine mind. It did none of these things. It did not "satisfy" the demands of the law in the sense that we are excused from obedience to that law, or that, as a penalty, it paid off any of our bad accounts. We do not

"make the law of none effect through faith. God forbid: nay, we establish the law." (Rom. 3:31.) The cross revealed the relentless resentment of God against sin, and the unchangeable purpose, the unalterable character of God. It is a revelation of the continuity of divine law and of our obligation to keep it. It revealed that God is just and righteous. It is, first of all, a revelation of the divine egoism.

Divine altruism, as well as divine egoism, is manifested through the cross. There the love of self and the love of others combine into one harmonious principle. There self-loyalty and service are seen to be one and inseparable. To attempt to separate these elements of true character is morally disastrous; for to be righteous without love is to be a Pharisee or a tyrant; to love without righteousness is to be a sentimentalist or a libertine. In the cross of Christ righteousness and love, egoism and altruism, self-preservation and self-sacrifice are seen to be in perfect harmony.

Both love and law, therefore, are at the cross. It is love of holiness and love of us that shines

from Calvary. "Christ died *for us.*" It was grace and truth that brought Him to the manger and to the cross. The cross was the price of His spiritual self-preservation: it was also the cost of loving us; for our sin and helplessness imposed the price.

"All 's love, yet all 's law," said Browning; and with this agree the words of Paul, who said in fine phrase:

"He that loveth his neighbor hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not covet, and if there be any other commandment, it is summed up in this word, namely, THOU SHALT LOVE THY NEIGHBOR AS THYSELF. LOVE WORKETH NO ILL TO HIS NEIGHBOR: LOVE THEREFORE IS THE FULFILLMENT OF THE LAW."

CHAPTER IX

Forgiveness Through the Cross

"Justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in His blood."—Rom. 3:24, 25.

Chapter IX

FORGIVENESS THROUGH THE CROSS

BUT some one will say, What connection has the death of Christ with the forgiveness of sinners? Was the historic death of Jesus not necessary to make the remission of sin possible?

The answer to that is: The mere shedding of the Savior's blood and His physical death did not make it any easier for the Father to forgive sin afterward than before. The death of Jesus did not increase God's tenderness and mercy toward the repentant sinner. Centuries before the crucifixion the psalmists had written, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so Jehovah pitieth them that fear Him," and "For Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in lovingkindness unto all them that call upon Thee;" and Isaiah had written, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto Jehovah,

and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." The sight of His bleeding Son did not make God hate sin any less, nor love penitents any more. God loved the world before He sent His only begotten Son. The physical death of Jesus was not demanded as a prerequisite of justification. The blood of Christ may be the *sine qua non* of a perfect revelation and of a perfect repentance, but not of a perfect forgiveness. It is not the material blood of Jesus that cleanses us from all sin—not the blood composed of serum and corpuscles that sprinkled the hill of Calvary, which "redeemed us" and "washed us," and by which we shall overcome. But this material blood is tremendously significant, symbolical, and sacramental of the spiritual fact lying back of it, namely, the GRACE OF GOD, who loved us and gave Himself for us; the grace that suffers to save; the grace that freely forgives and "passes over the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God," when the sinner repents and turns from sin. The blood of Christ is evidence and sacramental symbol of the love of God for

a lost world—a love which gave up life to save. Blood in the Bible is always symbol of life. The blood of Jesus, therefore, is the sacramental symbol of divine life laid down for the love of men. Divine grace that empties itself, takes the form of a servant, and becomes obedient even unto the death of the cross, is the *ground* of forgiveness; and the blood of Jesus is the ground of our *assurance* of forgiveness. We are "justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus . . . *through faith in His blood.*" Faith in Christ means the practical assurance that He is the truth about God. It is "assurance of things hoped for, a conviction [or *test*] of things not seen." I have good reason to believe that my sins are forgiven when in faith I receive the blood of Jesus as the evidence of God's grace to the penitent. "Hereby know we love, because He laid down His life for us." The blood is, therefore, the ground of a Christian's faith, but not in itself, apart from the grace behind it, the ground of forgiveness. We are saved by grace through faith.

In England, it is said, over the burial place

of a Crusader lie side by side in effigy, their arms crossed over their breasts in everlasting stillness, the forms of a knight and his fair lady. Clad in armor, and complete from head to foot, rests the figure of the stalwart knight. The figure of the lady, however, while in all else perfect and entire, is marred by a missing hand.

The curious traveler is told the following story in explanation of the handless arm. During the Crusades the knight was captured by Saladin, the Moslem leader. When asked to give a reason why he should not be put to death, the knight replied that he had, back in old England, a lady loyal, who loved him with supreme devotion, and that if he were killed her heart would break. Saladin, who had naught but doubt for woman's love and loyalty, in scorn of his captive's confidence, laughed a mocking laugh and said, "She will soon forget her grief, and will soon be married to another." "Not so," said the knight; "she would give her right hand for me." "Ah! we shall see," said Saladin. "I promise thy life if thy lady send to me her

beautiful white hand." This grim message was sent to the lady, whereupon she had her right hand cut off and sent to Saladin. "Ah!" said he, in surprise, "now I know thou hast told me the truth. Now I know the heart of one true and loyal woman. Thou shalt not die. Thou art free."

So does the nail-pierced hand of Jesus remove the doubt of God's forgiving grace and become the ground of our assurance of forgiveness—the basis of our faith; but back of the bloody hand is the heart of love, which is the ground and source of forgiveness itself. The sacrifice of the hand made no change in the love and loyalty of the devoted lady; but it made a tremendous difference at the other end of the transaction. After such a sacrifice neither Saladin nor the knight could ever question the love that prompted it. No more can we, unless we be hopelessly skeptical, doubt the grace of God, who commended His love toward us in the appalling death of His Son in order that we might know God, and knowing Him, be saved from doubt and sin, and so find peace. No more

can we doubt the exceeding sinfulness of sin that imposed the sacrifice.

But some one will say, Can a just God simply pass over our sins, and forgive them upon our repentance alone, without some "satisfaction" or "propitiation," and treat our past sins as though they had not been?

Well, our past sins are not as though they had not been, even after forgiveness. Certain organic and social consequences follow even forgiven trespasses against God's law. The reckless libertine, the drunkard, or the embezzler is not saved at one stroke from all the organic and social consequences of past misdeeds. The same is true of all sins, more or less, according to the nature and circumstances of the sin. Consequences of sin are not necessarily obliterated when we are converted and forgiven. The effects of our old sins sometimes go on to curse other people long after we ourselves have made our peace with God; and this is part of the inescapable penalty of sin in spite of forgiveness. If Christ's sufferings are to be considered as the sufficient substituted *penalty* for our sins,

then why are the penalties not all remitted? Either His sufferings were not sufficient, or else they were not *penalties* at all.

In reality, forgiveness does not include the removal of organic and social consequences at all. Forgiveness is the re-establishment of friendly personal relations after those relations have been broken by sin. Sin is forgiven, but none of the consequences, except those that hinge on past unfriendly relations between man and God. The suffering caused by the consciousness of being wrong, inferior, and helpless, the fear of coming judgment, the disquietude of a dual personal life, the sense of personal isolation that sin brings, are all removed. All spiritual penalties that result from personal alienation between a soul and its God are necessarily remitted. The sentence of spiritual death which hangs over every unrepentant soul is suspended. But there are certain organic and social penalties that are not included in the pardon. After his adultery with Bathsheba and his virtual murder of Uriah, David suffered the deepest moral anguish. He received the assurance of divine forgiveness.

His soul was restored, his spiritual peace returned. But the memory of his crime never left him; the child born of this illicit act died; domestic and political troubles growing out of his sin continued for years, and perhaps for generations; Uriah was not brought back to life, nor Bathsheba's womanly virtue restored. The Prodigal Son was restored to his father's favor, but the evidence of his sinful life remained in weakened body and dissipated resources.

In spite of this, however, the change in the human spirit that accompanies the assurance of forgiveness, namely, regeneration, has in many cases so profound and mysterious an influence on the body as to remove certain pathological conditions. A friend of mine was completely cured, some years after his conversion, at the moment of a more complete consecration, of an intense craving for tobacco. The story of "Old Born Drunk," in Begbie's "Twice-Born Men," and of "The Regenerate," by Norman Duncan, in *The Century* of January, 1911, are notable instances—many times duplicated—of the eradication of a most deeply-seated alcoholism.

Nevertheless, the results of regeneration must never be confused with those of forgiveness, even though they might occur in the same moment of time.

Forgiveness, however, is no small thing; for suddenly to be conscious that the Father is reconciled to us and we to Him, that His personal displeasure against our conduct is a thing of the past, bring ineffable peace and joy and restoration of soul.

God can justly forgive the repentant sinner because, in a sense, sincere repentance renders one no longer a sinner. The thief on the cross was no longer a thief when in faith and penitence he turned to Christ's mercy. That moment he repudiated his old self and was a new man. I can justly forgive my child who has told me a lie the moment she comes to me in tears, puts her little arms around my neck, and sobs out her sorrow for her sin. She has repudiated the lie, and is no longer a liar. I shall not ask her to do further penance, nor shall I ask any one to do penance for her, nor to make any further satisfaction or propitiation to me.

To do so would be unjust and ungracious. For her falsehood she has suffered and I have suffered. I have suffered because of my love for truthfulness and because of my love for her. I am *propitiated*, if the word be insisted on, the moment she repudiates her sin and turns to me for pardon. My suffering love is atonement for her, my grace is sufficient for her.

In the Art Building at the World's Fair at St. Louis was a fine little picture entitled, "Vergib uns unsere Schulden." Standing in the street door was a young woman, the daughter of the family, who was evidently returning from a life of shame, now repentant and longing for forgiveness. At a table in the center of the room were three persons—the mother, father, and only brother of the girl. The mother was standing behind the table, wiping her tears with the corner of her apron, yearning to clasp the repentant daughter in an embrace of forgiveness, but evidently not daring to do so; for both the father and the son sat sullenly, taking little notice of the girl. The father would not so much as look at her. The brother looked at her out

of the corner of his eye, with a sneer upon his countenance. There was no forgiveness in their hearts for the sinner, and the poor girl hesitated in fear upon the threshold.

It was a fine picture of a wrathful father demanding propitiation, and would have been a fitting frontispiece for some treatises on the atonement, for it represented the idea so stoutly insisted on by some writers, that the main object of the atonement was not "man's subjective moral improvement," but the satisfaction of the justice of God—"to remove from the divine mind an obstacle to the showing of favor to the guilty."* There was nothing about the father or the son to remind one of the God whom Jesus Christ manifested. The only godlike person in the scene was the mother, who stood ready to forgive and to clasp the sin-sick girl in her motherly arms.

There is no obstacle in the divine mind to showing favor to the guilty, if the guilty truly and earnestly repent of their sins, if, indeed, the story of the prodigal son means anything. That

*A. H. Strong—Systematic Theology.

there was no obstacle in the father's mind is the pith of the story. The elder brother quite agreed with some modern theologians and with the Pharisees of that time, that there ought to have been an obstacle. But the elder brother does not seem to be very popular with Christ.

If that little picture in the art gallery could have been changed so as to show the aged father weeping over his daughter's sin, and praying and yearning with broken heart for her return from a life of shame, and sending his son, the pride and glory of his home, to seek the wanton girl to tell her of the welcome that awaits her at home when she shall turn from sin,—that would have been something like the God of the gospel.

Suppose, however, the daughter doubts her father's gracious spirit. "How shall I know that he will receive me?" "Believe in me," replies the son. "Would I have crossed those fearful mountains, and met with storm and beasts and robbers, and braved the sneers of thy companions, if I knew not my father's heart? Thou seest my bleeding feet, my thorn-

pierced hands. O thou of little faith! wherefore shouldst thou doubt? Behold me, and thou hast seen the father. Believe in me." "But what propitiation shall I bring, what expiation make?" "Ah! thou hast nothing thou canst bring, except thyself repentant. I have redeemed thee. His grace is sufficient for thee. Behold my hands and my feet: are they not propitiation for thy sins? Father so loves thee that he sent me, his only son, that if thou shouldst believe in me, thou shouldst not perish here, but shouldst cease from sin and turn again home. Thy father's suffering righteousness and love atone for thee, and I am the scarred and bleeding witness that he is propitious—not to thy sins, but to thee, when thou shalt leave thy life of shame and be reconciled to him. Thou canst not live at home and live in sin; for he is righteous, and hates thy sin; but he is gracious and propitious whenever thou shalt forsake thy way and come back to virtue and our love."

Whereupon some of the vile companions who consorted with the girl, hearing this conversa-

tion, took counsel how they might destroy him and keep the girl in bondage; for she was profitable unto them. "Let us seduce him; for if we can lead him into partnership with our sins, his mouth is closed, and he will not dare to return to his father, and, besides, we have gained a new recruit."

But all their seductive arts were vain, every assault on his virtue was repelled. He remained loyal to his father, to himself, to his sister, to his mission. Had he yielded, there were no one left to speak for the father and to plead with the sister. Upon him rested the responsibility of declaring the father's righteousness and mercy. He must remain holy, or have his message of the father's holiness and love discredited. It was wantonness and doubt he came to destroy; but how could he destroy the works of the devil if he should yield to the devil? He must, therefore, maintain his virtue, and make it plain that there could be no reconciliation except on the father's terms of future purity. He must propitiate the father by dying, if need be, in order to uphold the father's demand for righteousness.

After their bland arts had failed, these evil men and women tried sterner measures. They did not wish to lose their victim. Besides, this young man's fidelity and chastity rebuked their wickedness. They must away with him. So they set upon him and beat him and left him for dead. This was their defeat; for not only had they failed to conquer his righteous and loving spirit with seductions and violence, but the sister, seeing this fidelity to the father and to her, began to hate her sin as she had never hated it—the sin that could impose a ransom such as this. Could she longer doubt the father's righteousness and love? Would this heroic brother brave such moral and physical dangers if he did not know the father's heart? In her brother's blood she sees the ugliness of her own sin, and the beauty of holiness and grace. It is enough. She renounces her sin and her companions, and returns home. Sin and hell have met a double defeat. The blood is the token of the covenant, and her faith appropriates the father's grace of which it speaks. It first awakens in the sinner deep sorrow and horror

for her sin, and then a sense of cleansing and peace.

"My God is reconciled;
His pardoning voice I hear;
He owns me for His child,
I can no longer fear:
With confidence I now draw nigh,
And, 'Father, Abba, Father,' cry."

This parable falls short of the truth in that the father and son are not "one" in the identical mode in which the Divine Father and Son are one; but in the light of this human analogy, are not the classic words of Romans 3:24-26 natural and intelligible? Why burden them with metaphysics and mechanical ethics? Why manufacture moral difficulties in the Godhead merely to fit the supposed exigencies of the text? "All have sinned:" no comment is necessary on this literal truth. That fact is the cause of all the trouble. "Being justified freely by His grace:" that is quite literal and simple. "Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:" Jesus paid the price of our moral

reclamation in His incarnation, suffering, and death. No haggling about the meaning of "redemption" is necessary. It is simply the price paid to win us from our moral wildness, as the farmer toils and suffers to redeem his farm from miasmal swamps, tangled vines, and cockleburs, that it may bring forth useful harvests. "Whom God set forth to be a propitiation,"—as the father in the foregoing parable set forth his son as the pledge of his propitiousness and in lieu of all other propitiation, and as the son, in being loyal to his father's character, propitiated the demands of that character. "Through faith in His blood:" the blood of the Son is the evidence of divine propitiousness, and faith is belief in and personal appropriation of the evidence. "To show His righteousness:" Christ's fidelity to the moral law showed that. Without that firm adherence to righteousness, the "passing over of sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God" would have appeared to be immoral. Forgiveness of the unrighteous past with no reference to a righteous future on the part of the forgiven would not be a just

or moral act. "For the showing of His righteousness at this present season: that he might be just and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus:" the justice of justification is evident when the act of justification involves no deviation on the part of God from His own moral demands. In other words, justification is just when regeneration and sanctification are the end.

Objection may be raised to the adequacy of the human illustrations of fatherly forgiveness used above to represent the facts of divine forgiveness. Inadequate they are—but in degree, not in quality or kind. Is not God a Father? Is not this the message of the life and death of Christ? Is this not the meaning of the cross? The Divine Father, in the person of the Eternal Son, has suffered intensely to make Himself manifest to us, to reveal the nature of sin, and to bring us to deep repentance and to newness of life. He offered Himself in blood for our sins. His holy and loving nature demanded that He sacrifice Himself in the incarnation and the crucifixion for the manifestation and maintenance of His righteousness, and as the expression

and consequence of His love. In His human nature He died in the conflict with sin in order that He might propitiate or satisfy His divine character of holy love. What more can any theory of the atonement demand? Is not the vision of the righteous and loving Father whose name Jesus manifested (John 17:6 and 26) enough to satisfy the mind and heart of men and women? And is not the blood of Christ the certain evidence that the Father is righteous, and at the same time propitious toward the repentant sinner—both "just and the justifier?"

The principle of the cross, which is in the heart of Deity and in the creation from the beginning, is the eternal propitiation for the sins of the whole world. The suffering holy love of God is atonement. The free grace of God is the ground of forgiveness. Atonement becomes effectually operative, however, only when the sinner appropriates it by repentance and by taking up the cross as the motive-principle of his life. Reconciliation (or forgiveness) becomes actual only when the soul surrenders by an act of loving trust to the righteousness and grace of

God. One can not be a disciple without taking up the cross. We sing—

"Nearer, my God, to Thee, nearer to Thee,
E'en though it be a cross that raiseth me,"—

as if the cross were the exceptional method of drawing us nearer to God—the method of last resort. The fact is, there is no other way except the way of the cross. "Whosoever doth not bear his own cross, and come after Me, can not be My disciple" means that if any one will not renounce his selfish individualism and accept the life of loyalty to the character of God and of self-denying service of men, he can not be a Christian; he can not be reconciled to God, nor God to him; he has no benefit of the atonement of grace, and no pardon. Sinners are justified of past offenses by the principles of the cross personally appropriated, and there is no other way.

Taking up the cross as the motive-principle of life is the new birth, and is reconciliation. "I am crucified with Christ" is Paul's way of saying that the cross of Christ has become the

living principle of his own life, the energy behind all his activity, the source of his justification and peace, and the basis of his fellowship with Christ. In taking up the cross and following Jesus in personal surrender to Him we are at one with God; by walking in the light as He is in the light we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus cleanseth us from all sin.

CHAPTER X

The Power of the Cross

"The word of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us who are saved it is the power of God."—1 Cor. 1:18.

Chapter X

THE POWER OF THE CROSS

THE historic death of Christ was necessary for two reasons: (1) To make complete revelation of the character of God as holy love; (2) To reproduce that character in humanity.

It is clear that, if men are to be reconciled and saved, the character of God must be established beyond question. We must know what God is. In the words and life of Jesus we may see plainly the righteousness and the love of God, and God's design for human character. In the death of Jesus we see His absolute loyalty to that character. There is no other conceivable way by which God's absolute loyalty to righteousness could be fully made known, except to meet, as a man, the temptations of human life, and to resist them "even unto blood." Anything short of a most excruciating death could

not have revealed how invulnerable that loyalty was.

Neither is there any other conceivable way by which God could effectually reproduce His character of holy love in us except by dying for us. God's grand purpose is to win our love. The very substance of salvation is to love God with all our might, and our fellow-men as ourselves. How is this spiritual condition to be produced? By *love*. There is no other way. Like begets like. Only love begets love. God is powerful; and He rules the physical universe by power; but He can not rule by physical force in the moral sphere. In the very nature of the case He can not save a soul by overriding the soul by force. Nobody is ever conquered by force. A person can be imprisoned, or beaten, or killed, without being conquered. They killed Christ, but they did not conquer Him. You can kill a criminal without saving his soul. You can whip a child until he obeys you; but you have not conquered him until you secure his obedience by his love for the right and for you. Corporal punishment administered by the State,

by a teacher, or by a parent is not efficacious if given in hate, anger, or revenge. Love may sometimes use severe methods; but it is only love that can safely and profitably chastise. The Lord's punishments are all given in love. "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth."

Neither can a soul be frightened into salvation; for a human spirit is not saved until it is made to love; and fear in itself does not create love. We may sometimes be scared out of certain sins, for prudential considerations; but we can not be scared into loving obedience. A good scare is sometimes helpful in bringing one to his moral senses, but salvation can not end in a scare.

God's chief appeal is not to the reason. It is hard to reason anybody out of his sins and into love. Reason has large place in religion; but no one's religion amounts to much if it begins and ends in the intellect. Reason can not produce love. Reason produces a creed.

Hezekiah expressed the whole philosophy of salvation when he sang, "Thou hast loved my soul from the pit of corruption." (Isa. 38:17.)

Wicked old John Newton, after he had become a saint, sang:

"In evil long I took delight,
Unawed by shame or fear,
Till a new object struck my sight,
And stopped my wild career.

"I saw One hanging on a tree
In agonies and blood,
Who fixed His languid eyes on me
As near the cross I stood."

It was the vision of the crucified Savior that regenerated my own soul and won me to Him. I love because He first loved me. Nobody is ever conquered until he is conquered by love. That is why God's sun and rain are given alike to the good and to the evil. If it never rained on a bad man's field, he might be driven to keep the letter of the law through compulsion of force and fear; but it would not win his love, and he is not won until he is won to love.

Christ will win us by what He is in Himself or He will not win at all. He proposes to win by the surpassing excellence of His character

and His deep love for us. If the length and breadth and height of Christ's love for our souls can not draw us out of the pit of corruption, we are there to stay. Can one imagine what else more efficacious God could do to win our love than He has done? Can one suggest something more winsome than the character and the cross of Christ?

The cross is both light and power. It is revelation; but it is much more: it is "the power of God unto salvation." If there is no reconciliation between God and man apart from a transformation of the character of man into the likeness of God, it is evident that God must furnish the spiritual energy by which that transformation can be effected. There must be a powerful incentive to repentance, and a "power not ourselves" to quicken and strengthen our latent spiritual resources. It is not enough that God make a seed endowed with latent life; He must also give the sun, rain, and soil to quicken and develop the life of the seed. Likewise it is not enough that God endow us with a spiritual nature; He must shine upon us by the

glory of His own character, that we who are dead in trespasses and sins may be quickened into repentance and newness of life. At the cross the clouds roll back; His glory is visible, His character unveiled; and the cross becomes "the power of God unto salvation,"—a reconciling medium, a transforming power.

In previous chapters it has been urged that the cross is a principle found in the normal human heart, the light that lighteth every man coming into the world. Although, in our unenlightened, unquickened state this principle is obscured and narrowed in scope, yet it is the very Spirit of the living God in us, the broken light of God's glory. That natural principle constitutes the basis of the supernatural appeal. There is power, therefore, in the historic crucifixion to regenerate and sanctify, because it has a basis of appeal in our best natural human affections. By the revelation of God's self-loyalty and vicariousness an appeal is made to the best instinct of the human heart—its own native capacity for self-sacrifice—an appeal that is the most powerful and quickening of all

spiritual appeals. "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me." The cross within the soul answers to the cross without; the spiritual principle *involved* into the cosmos answers to the historic fact of the crucifixion; the Spirit of God in man to the Spirit of God in Christ. When the soul disturbed by conviction for sin gets a vision of the cross of Christ, and realizes that it is the objectification of the better self, as well as of the heart of Deity, there is a sudden leap of the Spirit within toward the Word without—a sudden *recognition,* a "begetting by the Word of God," followed by a sense of inward peace and reconciliation—a witnessing of the Spirit with our spirit that we are the children of God, whereby we cry, "Abba, Father."

> "The Spirit answers to the blood,
> And tells me I am born of God."

Condemnation seems suddenly to be lifted, and a sense of pardon possesses the soul. God's love then becomes "manifested *in* us," as John says, and the atonement of grace becomes effectual.

"The word of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us who are saved it is the power of God." (1 Cor. 1:18.) The cross of Christ is revelation; it is also the means by which God through the Holy Spirit changes the heart of man, and reconciles the world unto Himself. It is light and power. "Christ the Power of God and the Wisdom of God."

CHAPTER XI

The Principle of the Lord's Supper

"He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life."

"It is the Spirit that giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life."

John 6:54, 63.

Chapter XI

THE PRINCIPLE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

IT seems clear that atonement in its fullest sense is symbolized by the Lord's Supper; and the view of the atonement outlined in this treatise receives strong support from this sacrament. It is surely the sacrament of the cosmic law of vicariousness. The broken bread and the expressed juice of the grape are themselves an exhibition of the fact that even in the sub-human world beings give up their lives for other lives. "This is My body which is given for you." "This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for you." In these words, as in His reply to the Greeks, Jesus proclaims that His act of self-giving is akin to that of the grain of wheat crushed to make bread, and to the grape pouring out its life for others. The fact of communion at this point is what gives value to the bread and wine as elements of the sacrament. It is a cosmic truth here made

sacramental. Jesus here proclaims that His sacrifice on Calvary is the cap-stone of the universal vicariousness that has its broad base in the constitution of nature—the climax of the total plan. He proclaims by inference that the sign of the cross is upon the wheat and upon the grape, and these elements, in their self-sacrifice for others, point to Him as the fulfillment of their law, and thus become an age-long memorial of His death and passion for us.

This ceremony, however, is not merely the sacrament of vicariousness, but of vicariousness *appropriated.* Bread and wine are useless as a sacrament until taken into the body. So is there no value in the broken body and shed blood of Jesus until we eat Christ's flesh and drink His blood, even as He said in the sixth of John. The grace of God cleanses us from all sin only when we appropriate the principles of loyalty and of altruism to our own lives by taking up the cross. Without personal acceptance of a life of loyalty to truth and of self-devotion to the service of others, there is no forgiveness; for we are yet in our sins, and have neither part

nor lot in this matter. "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins;" and we must mingle our blood with the Savior's. Christ *appropriated* is the means of salvation—the cause of eternal life; for "except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, ye have not life in yourselves." There is no pardon outside of an *appropriated* Christ; if we have not the Spirit of Christ, we are none of His; there is no reconciliation apart from conformity to the law of His life and death; there is no mysterious atonement wrought in heaven for those who are not willing to wear the cross deep in their hearts, like the aged Sir Launfal; but there is grace enough behind the cross of Calvary to cover the past offenses of the whole world against truth and love, if only the world will in faith turn to Christ's cross and take it up as the supreme principle of human life.

"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of [participation in] the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ?" (1 Cor. 10:16.) These are significant words. To par-

take of the "Communion" without having the Spirit of Christ—which is the Spirit of the cross —to take the sacrament, while selfishness reigns in our lives, is to eat the bread and drink the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, and to be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. It is like eating friendly bread with the spirit or heart of an enemy, as did Judas. "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:" there is no atonement, no propitiation; "but if we walk in the light"—the light of the cross—"as He is the light, we have *fellowship* one with another (that is, we with God, as well as Christians with one another), and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanseth us from all sin." This certainly means that it is "fellowship" that makes atonement effectual; and there is no fellowship with God apart from fellowship in the blood of Jesus, seal and symbol of the divine principle of self-loyalty and loving service. Outside of this principle there is no communion between man and God. In the "fellowship of Christ's sufferings" we are cleansed and saved; and there

is none other name given among men, except a crucified Christ, whereby we can be saved. Only as we bear one another's burdens, as God in Christ has borne ours, shall we fulfill *"the law of Christ."*

CHAPTER XII

Modern Views and Ancient Language

"By grace have ye been saved through faith."—Eph. 2:8.

"Ministers of a new covenant; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."—2 Cor. 3:6.

Chapter XII

MODERN VIEWS AND ANCIENT LANGUAGE

PLAUSIBLE objection to the theory of atonement outlined in these studies may be made on the ground that it does not closely accord with the expiatory language of the Scriptures. Since this criticism weighs heavily in the minds of many, a few things should be said concerning the institution of sacrifice.

Sacrifice is a very ancient and widely practiced custom. Nearly all the important ancient cults comprised this element of worship, and the prevalence of bloody sacrifice is significant. An institution of this kind, primitive and all but universal, must have grown out of a fundamental instinct of the human soul. The psychologic fact back of the rite was, we believe, the sense of sin and the consequent feeling of the displeasure of Deity, together with the desire

for the favor and friendship of Deity. The author is aware of the arguments against this view of the sense of sin as the source of sacrifice, but to him they are not entirely convincing. Other notions than the sense of sin doubtless enter into the origin of sacrifice; but we believe this is the most powerful cause of the phenomenon. In recent theories of the origin of sacrifice we believe the conscience has not had its just dues.

The giving up of property in the form of the product of field or fold and its offering as a religious meal was intended as an exhibition to Deity of the worshiper's desire for communion. This act of unselfishness in voluntarily giving up the best of the flock or the first-fruits of the field gave the worshiper a sense of the divine favor. God was thought of as angry and needing propitiation, and moral unworthiness was thought of as needing expiation; or else God was conceived as in good humor, and the sacrifice was for the purpose of keeping Him so. Propitiation of Deity and expiation of sin were, by a sound spiritual instinct, supposed to be procured by an act

of unselfishness on the part of the worshiper. The worshiper recognized his debt to Deity and that the debt demanded the gift of his own life, or of what was in some cases dearer than life. This is the explanation of the ancient practice of the sacrifice of children. This moral instinct is evident in Abraham's offering of Isaac, and in the Hebrew notion of the devotedness of the first-born and its redemption. The sacrifice of animals in lieu of the life of the worshiper or of the worshiper's child was a symbolic act by which human obligation of self-sacrifice to Deity was recognized. Deity was supposed to accept this sacrifice as an acknowledgment of the moral debt, and was propitiated. Tragically misguided though it was, the spiritual instinct felt clearly that unselfishness was the basis of reconciliation.

The Mosaic system did not inaugurate, but rather incorporated and elaborated the institution of the sacrifice. Prominent in Old Testament thought is the expiatory and propitiatory idea. Even the superficial student can see that, whatever might have been the primitive, pre-Mosaic notion of sacrifice, the dominant idea in

the elaborated system of Judaism is that of expiation for sin and propitiation of Deity.

That these costly and bloody sacrifices really, in themselves, effected the forgiveness of sin and the propitiation of God was denied by the prophets and by New Testament interpreters of religion. "Obedience is better than sacrifice," declared Samuel. "Sacrifice and offering Thou hast no delight in: mine ears hast Thou opened; burnt-offering and sin-offering hast Thou not required. . . . I delight to do Thy will, O God; yea, Thy law is within my heart." (Psa. 40: 6-8.) "Thou delightest not in sacrifice; else would I give it: Thou hast no pleasure in burnt-offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite spirit, O God, Thou wilt not despise." (Psa. 51: 16, 17.) Isaiah declared that God had had enough of the burnt-offerings of rams, and that He delighted not in the blood of bullocks; that righteousness of life was the only acceptable offering. Jeremiah went so far as to say that Jehovah had not commanded these bloody oblations when Israel came out of Egypt. Hosea proclaimed that God

desired goodness and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings. (Ch. 6:6.) Amos (5:21-24) and Micah (6:6-8) declared the same truth. The writer of Hebrews specifically denied that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

Nevertheless, it would be wrong to assume that the institution of sacrifice was not without value. While the blood of animals alone effected no change in the attitude of Deity toward the worshiper, yet the pathetic offering of innocent animals for the sins of the people had important educative value to the primitive mind in deepening the sense of sin and the idea of God's holiness. It emphasized man's moral unworthiness to approach a pure God without the principle of self-sacrifice symbolized in the blood of the victim. It accentuated the idea of God's opinion of sin and the idea of vicariousness involved in the shedding of the blood of a substituted victim.

It was to be expected that New Testament teachers would make use of these ideas of sacrifice in expounding to the people educated in this bloody cult the meaning of Christ's death.

The idea of substituted propitiatory sacrifice was the point of contact with that age. The Book of Hebrews is an elaborate attempt to relate the older covenant with the new, and to show the analogy between the priesthood and death of Christ and the priesthood and sacrifices of the older cult. But analogy is not identity. There may be striking analogy between the death of the sacrificial victim and the sacrificial death of the Savior; but that does not necessarily imply the same ethical and religious significance. Points of analogy between the ancient institution of sacrifice and the death of Christ, New Testament teachers are fond of pointing out. For instance, as the blood of lambs was formerly supposed to take away sin, now, they say, "Behold in Christ the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." As there was redemption of the first-born by the sacrifice of money, so now, they declare, under the new covenant there is redemption in the blood of Christ. As by the shedding of blood in sacrifice there was supposed to be remission of sins, so in the blood of Christ there is forgiveness. As there was

thought to be propitiation of God in sacrificial offering, so Christ is now the propitiation for our sins. As the blood of the Passover saved the life of those who sprinkled it upon their doors, so Christ is our Passover. All this is the language, not of identity, but of analogy. It is not necessary to infer identity of function between the blood of bulls and of goats and the blood of Christ. Because the former was conceived to be actual propitiation for sin we need not infer that the latter was actual propitiation of an offended God who required satisfaction before He would remit sin, or that Christ was a literal oblation substituted for the sinner.

The sacrificial language of the New Testament requires for its true interpretation, in order to be consistent with the general thought of God's attitude toward men, a principle different from that of identity. The ethics and the spirit of the Christian religion would seem to demand an interpretation of this sacrificial language somewhat as follows: Back of the salvation of man, including remission of sin, regeneration, and sanctification, and the preservation of the

soul to eternal life, is the grace of God. Of this ineffable grace the blood of the God-man is the sign and seal—the seal of a *new* covenant, not of the continuation of the old one. You (the Jews) have ransomed your first-born with money or with substituted sacrifice: now, under the covenant of grace, the grace of God manifested in the blood of Jesus is your ransom, your redemption. You have been offering blood, thinking to propitiate Jehovah for your sins: now God's grace, through faith in Christ's blood as the sure testimony of that grace, is to be accepted as the sufficient propitiation and atonement for your sins. God is not an ill-natured and bloodthirsty Being: He is your righteous and gracious Father, whose "grace is sufficient for you." Cease these bloody expiations and propitiations; for the grace of the Father is the sufficient propitiation for the sins of the whole world. Believe in the blood of Christ as the sacramental symbol of that grace, and let it take the place in your thought formerly occupied by bloody sin-offerings. This self-respecting, self-sacrificing love of God, at high tide in the death

of Christ, is the sufficient fountain of forgiveness, redemption, ransom, propitiation, atonement, the substitute for all the cruel and bloody sacrifices of the former days, the complete satisfaction of all your spiritual instincts. This is the "good news" of the Kingdom.

This principle of analogy, we believe, meets the exigencies of Scripture language without doing violence to the New Testament thought of God, and has the further merit of keeping the atonement within the sphere of our experience and of relieving the subject from mysticism.

CHAPTER XIII

Recapitulation

"To sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth."
Eph. 1:10.

Chapter XIII

RECAPITULATION

IT may be helpful to a clearer understanding of the foregoing exposition to bring the main points together in a brief résumé.

1. The material and spiritual creation is God's expression of Himself. Both natural and moral laws are the divine will impressed upon the cosmos. Christ the Son is the eternal objective expression of Deity, "the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in Him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and invisible; . . . all things have been created through Him and unto Him; and He is before all things, and in Him all things consist." (Col. 1:15, 16.) The Eternal Son is the *Word,* (that is, the Expression of Deity), that was in the beginning with God, and was God, "the effulgence of His glory, the very image [or impress] of His sub-

stance." The historic Christ is that Word become flesh, and dwelling among us as the "human life of God."

2. The cross, in its largest meaning, is the cosmic expression of divine integrity and of divine love. It is the exhibition, both in nature and in history, of the divine struggle for self-realization. In other words, it is the struggle to "reconcile all things unto Himself . . . through the blood of His cross; whether of things upon earth, or things in the heavens." A human analogy is a sculptor struggling to realize his conception in a statue, or a moral reformer struggling to realize his moral ideal in social conditions. In each case there is an effort to reconcile the objective with the subjective.

3. This cosmic struggle is manifested in nature (1) in the law of struggle for self-preservation and the survival of the fitttest, with man as the consummation; (2) in the law of struggle for the life of others. In the moral sphere it is manifested (1) in the phenomenon of self-propitiation, by which is meant the voluntary sacrifice of some temporal good—even physical life

itself—for the maintenance of moral integrity. In the moral world the primitive struggle for life takes the form of the struggle for holiness—the realization of the spiritual self.

The death on the cross was God's oblation of Himself to Himself, the satisfaction in suffering given by Incarnate Deity to the demands of His own holy character or law—the "propitiation" made by the world's Savior in pain and shedding of blood to His own self-respect. It was the price of self-preservation and of self-realization.

(2) The ancient struggle for the life of others culminates in the moral realm in Christian service. God's love for us sent the only begotten Son to suffer that we might not eternally suffer, to redeem us from ignorance, weakness, and sin. He did not suffer to defeat the claims of justice on us, nor to cheat the law out of its mortgage on sinners. He was not punished in our stead. He died not to release us from social and organic consequences of sin, but from sin itself. His death is no magical or mystical substitute for righteous living on our part. But His blessed life of purity and re-

nunciation for our enlightenment and help is "the power of God unto salvation" from sinful living, the healing fountain of living waters. Jesus is the climax of the cosmic principle of giving oneself for others—the completion of the cosmic law of love.

4. The historic death of Jesus, therefore, is the focus of the cosmic struggle where both these laws meet; where the divine character realizes itself in perfect expression; where divine integrity and divine love are together fulfilled in one act of supreme sacrifice. In this act things in heaven—elements in the very Godhead itself—are reconciled, realized, perfected. "Though He was a Son, yet [He] learned obedience by the things which He suffered; and *having been made perfect,* He became unto all them that obey Him the Author of eternal salvation." (Heb. 5: 8, 9.) "For it became Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Author of their salvation *perfect through sufferings.*" (Heb. 2:10.) These quotations indicate that the Godhead itself was in some sense

not perfect until "it is finished"* at the death of Christ. In the incarnation, death, and resurrection of the Man Christ Jesus, God Himself was "perfected" in the sense that He had completely realized Himself at one point in humanity. The blood of Christ, "who *through the Eternal Spirit* offered Himself without blemish unto God," did effect something in the Godhead, as well as in humanity. The death of Jesus made no elemental change in the Father's character, nor in His attitude toward men; but it did bring to perfection, in objective realization, the eternal character of God. The lady's act of severing her hand to send to Saladin for the redemption of her lover made no elemental change in her loyalty and love, but it did bring that loyalty and love to perfect objective realization. In the death of Jesus the divine character returns unto itself in a completed circle, reconciling the Godhead within itself. "Of Him, through Him, and unto Him are all things."

5. The historic death of Jesus also effected

*John 19: 30. The word *teleo*, to complete, make perfect, bring to maturity, is used in all these passages.

reconciliation "upon earth," in making complete self-revelation of God. Its glory "condemned sin in the flesh," as beauty condemns all ugliness, as truth condemns falsehood. The cross is pregnant with power to kill sin and death—to transform human character—to reconcile the world with the character of God, and so make peace. The cross of Christ is the result of the clash between God's character and man's sin. Sin is the dark background upon which is written in letters of living light the glory of God. Sin was the occasion and cause of the Savior's ineffable sufferings. Never was there such complete condemnation of sin as the crucifixion of the sinless Savior. At the cross holiness and love met sin in terrible conflict, and conquered. "Jesus conquered when He fell." Sin is an act or state which is the opposite of soul-loyalty and of love. It is, therefore, the denial of God. It can be cured only by its opposite—the principle of the cross, which is the affirmation of God.

6. We are forgiven of past offenses through the grace of God, revealed and symbolized by the blood of Jesus, which is the "propitiation for

our sins'' in the sense that it is the pledge of God's propitiousness toward the repentant sinner. Doubtless many theologians have insisted too strenuously upon the literalness of the sacrificial terms of the New Testament. The New Testament was addressed to people whose minds were thoroughly possessed by ideas of bloody sacrifices given to propitiate Deity or to redeem the soul. New Testament writers, taking this fact as an avenue of approach to the ancient mind, used the language of the altar in trying to make clear what Christ had done in heaven and in earth. ''You have been offering the blood of bulls and of goats as propitiation for your sins, as redemption for your souls; you have been sprinkling on your lintels and door-posts the blood of lambs as your passover. But now the crucified Christ is the propitiation for your sins, your redemption, your passover. He is the substitute for all these sacrifices.'' Is it necessary to insist on the absolutely literal character of these sacrificial terms in order to represent the real work of Christ? What they seem to the author to mean is, that the blood of Christ is a substitute

for all that old ceremonialism. God's grace speaking through the blood is a substitute for all the bloody hecatombs of the religion of fear. We are freely forgiven by the grace of God, which is a substitute for a righteousness which, up to the moment of our regeneration, we do not have.

We are forgiven of past sin the moment we believe in Jesus enough to renounce sin, and choose as our dominant motive the principle of the cross—namely, the principle of personal rectitude and of self-denying service, which is the essence of that pure religion which consists in visiting the fatherless and widows in their affliction and in keeping oneself unspotted from the world.

* * * * * *

And now we wish to give final emphasis to our thesis that "The Cross" is a cosmic fact not comprehended in its entirety by the physical death and spiritual suffering of Jesus on Calvary, but embraces the universal principle of the Loyal Self and of Vicariousness manifest in all creation, not alone at the culminating point

of its historic manifestation; although at that culminating point the two seemingly opposite laws of self-preservation and of self-sacrifice come into final and perfect harmony. Jesus is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Men, both before and after the historic death of the Son, are justified by the grace of God that speaks through the blood of Jesus, made effectual by their personal acceptance of the principle of the Eternal Cross; and that principle is embodied in these words of the Great Cross-bearer:

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; and, . . . Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,"—

a saying which embodies, first, loyalty to truth, and second, self-denying public spirit; and in these:

"If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whosoever would save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake shall find it."

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